THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 24TH–25TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

BACK TO WORK (ACTS 28:1–10)

"ONCE SAFELY ASHORE..."

The shore of the unknown island that the crew washed up on was Malta. Luke records that the people there showed "extraordinary kindness" by lighting a fire and taking them in.

- As Paul gathered wood for the fire, a "viper" came out of the fire because of the heat and "fastened itself" to Paul's hand.

"*JUSTICE* HAS NOT ALLOWED HIM TO LIVE"

The locals immediately took this as spiritual. The Maltese would have worshiped *Dike*, the *goddess of justice*, and this belief would have led them to assume Paul had committed an egregious act to garner the snake bite.

- "But [Paul] shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no harm."

CHRISTIANS AND SUPERSTITION-

Paul dismissed the snake, the fear of death, and what the locals thought of him because Paul was **theologically grounded** and **knew God's will** and destination for his life.

- **Many professing Christians allow superstitions and incorrect theology to creep in because they neglect Scripture**.

IGNORANCE IS VERY DANGEROUS

Hosea 4:6 says, **"My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge,"** and that because they have **"rejected"** and **"forgotten the law of your God,"** God will "forget" their children.

- **We will be judged by the knowledge we have access to** (Luke 12:41–48). **If we seek, God and His Word will save and guide us.**

THINKING PAUL WAS A GOD

When the people saw Paul was going to be ok, they went to the other extreme and "said he was a god."

- **When we are not rooted in sound biblical teaching, we tend to put an emphasis on things we shouldn't and can even go to the extreme of idolatry.**

THE "LEADING MAN OF THE ISLAND"

Paul met Publius, the leader of the island of Malta. Publius welcomed Paul and the men and showed great hospitality. Luke also tells us his father was very sick.

- Paul prayed for Publius's dad, and he was healed. This prompted "the rest of those on the island" to come to Paul and be healed.

WHO KNOWS HOW FAR THIS REACHED

Because of the miraculous works, the people of Malta provided Paul and the crew with everything they needed. **When it seemed like all was lost, God came through and restored everything back to the crew.**

- Christian tradition says Publius became a Christian and even the first bishop of Malta.

ROME (ACTS 28:11–16)

"AFTER THREE MONTHS"

By the time the crew left Malta, it would have been about February 61 A.D. They left Malta on a bigger ship adorned with the "Twin Gods." Castor and Pollux, the sons of Zeus, were the patron gods of sailors.

- Luke mentions this to again show the level of superstition during this time.

A LOT OF FREEDOM FOR A PRISONER

Not only was God showing Paul tremendous favor, but Paul's reputation with the crew had been firmly established because of his **character** and what God had done through him.

- **When we live in relationship with Jesus, He guides our path and even impacts others by the work He does in us.**

THE WORD HAD ALREADY REACHED ROME

We learn that Paul didn't bring the gospel to Italy because they found other Christians when they arrived. As they traveled north, they stayed with several "brothers and sisters."

- The Christians in the south spread the word to Rome that Paul had arrived. So, when he arrived, support was already there.

REALIZING JUST HOW MUCH GOD PROVIDES

When Paul saw the Christians waiting for him in the marketplace near Rome, "**he thanked God and took courage"** because **God's goodness was once again proven.**

- Paul had been a Christian for about 25 years. He'd gone from persecutor to persecuted, and God had taken him on an extraordinary ride.

MAKING SURE WE DON'T MISS IT

We can often be selfish and entitled. Even faithful Christians can get **caught up in life** (busyness)**, distractions, hardships,** and **even blessings** and **forget just how much God has done for us.**

- **We must prioritize time to meditate on Jesus and His goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5).

THE TEACHER AND THE DOCTOR TAKE IT ALL IN

One can imagine Paul and Luke stopping by every monument and site as they walk the streets of Rome awaiting their time with Nero.

- Jesus had brought Paul exactly where He promised He would. Paul would also suffer for His name—another promise Jesus had made decades earlier.

THE DANGERS OF IGNORANCE

- If we don't put effort into reading God's Word and being sensitive to His Spirit, **bad theology and meaningless superstitions will slip in and destroy us.**
- Negligence of sound theology does not only mislead us; **we will be held eternally accountable for accessible knowledge.**

THE CLARITY THE LIGHT OFFERS

- On the other hand, if we will **make an effort to seek the truth**, approach it **objectively** and with **humility**, and **submit to Jesus and His Word**, we will receive **wisdom** and **direction** for every aspect of our daily lives and for the **assurance of the salvation of our eternal souls!**

ARRIVING WHERE GOD WANTS US

- If we truly submit to Jesus, we will **seek His will first** (Matthew 6:33), knowing that it may be very different from what we expected.
- True Christians understand "all…things will be provided" for those who **trust that where God wants them is always better than where they might have wanted to be.**

A LIFE OF PURPOSE AND BALANCE

- We have to be honest about what is truly important to us. Jesus said, **"where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."**
- **Are we prioritizing the most important things?** Do we know Jesus and pursue deeper knowledge? Has our negligence of Scripture distorted our beliefs?
- Do we take the time to appreciate God's provision and **thank Him for all He has done and for who He is?**
- Do we **slow down** and enjoy life and His creation without becoming lazy or entitled?
- Do we **invest in others** because God has so graciously invested in us?
- **Does Jesus get our best or our leftovers?** Have we taken God for granted? Is a relationship with Him an afterthought or only important when we're in need?
- **Do we seek His will above all things? Or do we simply ask God to bless our plans as we turn a deaf ear to His?**

REMEMBERING BUILDS COURAGE

- When Paul took the time to stop and notice all God had done, his courage grew, regardless of the suffering he knew he would face.
- The same applies to us. **When we think on God, we gain strength because He is all-powerful and cares for us.**