

SERMON: MAKING IT ON BROKEN PIECES

Acts 27:41-44

(41) And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. (42) And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out and escape. (43) But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: (44) And the rest, some on board, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Introduction

The Apostle Paul was a prisoner on his way to Rome. He was in route to appeal his death sentence to Caesar. Every Roman citizen had that right, although it could take years to get an audience with Caesar. The journey by sea was treacherous at any time of the year, but this trip had been delayed to the most dangerous time of the year. Paul advised the crew not to set sail at all, predicting there would be trouble. He was ignored and they set sail for the dangerous trip to Italy. Soon after departure, a violent storm proved Paul right. The storm raged for days and the ship was adrift on the rolling sea until they saw an unknown island. Here was the challenge: if they steered it to the island correctly they would be spared. If not, the ship would be destroyed and they would be too far into the sea to survive.

On the final morning, the crew noticed a bay with a beach on this island. After strategizing, they planned to run the ship ashore on this beach. In trying to maneuver they struck a reef, the ship ran aground and the stern and many other parts of the ship were violently shattered into hundreds, if not thousands of pieces. There were other prisoners on board as well as other passengers. The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners so that none would swim away and escape. The centurion wishing to save Paul, because they had developed a personal connection, ordered those who could swim to abandon the ship and make their way to shore first. He then told those who could not swim to grab pieces of the wreckage of the battered ship and use them to float to shore.

Think about it, after two harrowing weeks at sea, a storm, and a ship wreck, two hundred seventy-six individuals reached shore safely. Some made it on their own power and some made it by clinging to pieces of the destroyed ship; nevertheless, all came to safety. Your virtual presence at this Watch Night service is proof that you made it through this unprecedented year of a pandemic, politics, protest, and natural disasters. Praise the Lord! We made it. Some swimming and some paddling on broken pieces of wood, but we made it. Hallelujah!

Exposition

1. The Ship Was Lost but Everyone Was Saved.

(A Bitter Sweet Reality)

(People Are More Important Than Things)

(Each of Us Have Lost Some Things, But We Are Still Here)

2. Broken Pieces of The Ship Became Instruments of God's Grace.

(Insignificant Things Are Part of God's Divine Purpose)

(The Broken Things in Our Lives Can Be a Blessing)
(Had the Ship Capsized In the Deep They All Would Have Drowned)

3. They Landed In Unfamiliar Territory, but God Sustained Them.

(We Are In Unfamiliar Territory Today, but God Will Sustain Us)
(God Brought Us Too Far To Leave Us Now)

Closing Thoughts

Storms will come, but the worst storms cannot hide the face of God or defeat His purpose. God had promised Paul that he would get to Rome. Thus, no storm or shipwreck would prevent Paul's arrival. God has a purpose for each of us and the situations of 2020 will not alter that purpose. So let us thank God for the broken pieces in our lives. The broken pieces help to make us whole. Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

Related Scripture

Acts 23:11

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