

God is For Us

How well do you deal with uncertainty in life? What emotions do you tend to feel? Do you respond with fear? Do you feel tremendous stress and anxiety? Do you get angry because things are out of your control? It can be a very difficult thing for many people. It is something we are learning to deal with in today's environment.

We aren't the first people to ever experience the frustration and stress of uncertain times. Scripture shares with us many details from the life of Paul and how he lived his life. His life was definitely filled with ups and downs, never really knowing what adventure or challenge was coming next.

Our text shares a fascinating story of Paul as he is imprisoned and is in a lengthy journey to Rome to meet with Caesar. He has been imprisoned for years and finally appealed his sentence to Caesar

Paul's life hasn't been easy. (2 Cor. 11:16-33) His enemies sought to imprison or kill him. The "legal" system was stacked against him. Now he was on a dangerous journey all the way to Rome as a prisoner. He definitely lived under a shadow of death and helped develop his faith. It was through times like these that he truly learned to understand the truth that God is truly for us!

Acts 27:13-26 (NASB)

¹³ *When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.*

¹⁴ *But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo;*

¹⁵ *and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along.*

¹⁶ *Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control.*

¹⁷ *After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along.*

¹⁸ *The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;*

¹⁹ *and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.*

²⁰ *Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.*

²¹ *When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.*

²² *"Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.*

²³ *"For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,*

²⁴ saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'

²⁵ "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.

²⁶ "But we must run aground on a certain island."

1. What questionable decision was made that caused Paul to issue a warning? (Acts 27:9-12)
2. Who do you consult when you need to make a tough decision? Why?
3. What thoughts must have been running through the minds of Paul and others during this storm? Explain.
4. How might people's opinion of Paul changed from the beginning of the journey to now? Why?
5. What gives Paul the moral authority to make the statements that he made?
6. Describe Paul's relationship with God at this point in his life. How did his previous experiences prepare him for this moment?
7. How have your life experiences helped develop your faith and prepare you for moments like today? Explain.
8. How can you share that faith with others?

Prayer Time:

- Pray for God's help in your circumstances
- Pray for faith in God's provision

Devotional Verses for the Week:

Monday:

Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB)

¹¹ *'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.*

- What are some of the "plans" that God has for your life?
- Is it encouraging or intimidating knowing that God has plans for your life? Explain.
- How does God's faith in you provide you with hope in troubled times?

Tuesday:

Matthew 10:29-31 (NASB)

²⁹ *"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.*

³⁰ *"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

- ³¹ *"So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*
- What is your value in God's eyes? Explain.
- We often draw our sense of value from others (boyfriend/girlfriend, boss, parents, popular people, etc). Who should be the primary person determining our value? Why?
- How would you describe the knowledge that God has of you? Why is that important?

Wednesday:

Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

- What do you think Paul means when he describes us as God's "workmanship"?
- What is our purpose for being here on earth? Explain.
- How are you doing at living out God's purpose for your life?

Thursday:

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NASB)

³ *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*

⁴ *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

- What are two of God's desires for us?
- Why would God desire for you to follow Him and be saved?
- Who needs to hear that truth today? How can you share it with them?

Friday:

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NASB)

⁸ *"The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*

- What sorts of things does God do by going "ahead of you"?
- How have you been convinced of the fact God will NOT fail or forsake you? Explain.
- How does God deal with your fear when you realize that God is for you?

Saturday:

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

- Who initiated the relationship between God and man? Why is that important?
- How did God show His love for man?
- What is God's ultimate desire for you? How can you share that great news with others?