

# Making the Most of Shipwrecks

Acts 28:1-16

## Are we there yet?

I wonder if the apostle Paul ever asked that? Are we there yet? I wonder if he ever got weary in ministry? Did he ever question his calling, frustrated by what seemed like would never happen?

What a blessing we have received in the revelation God has given us through His Word. We get to read God's answers to the questions we often have. Today we will read God's "yes." Yes Paul, you will get there. You will get there because I will see you through it.

As we look at the last leg of Paul's journey to Rome, I hope we're encouraged. I hope we can see how Paul and Luke walk through that time and we can learn a bit more about how we are to walk through this time. When the storms of life wreck our ship, what should we do?

## Making the Most of Shipwrecks

*How to bring glory and honor to God in the shipwrecks of life.*

### 1. Make \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_. (1-6)

So here's Paul, the Jew, tossed around at sea, near death, yet trusting God's word that they would not die, and they wash up on an island, no Jewish community here and likely very few Greek speakers even. And we can tell by the descriptions that Luke uses of this community that they are entrenched in a pagan society filled with a mixture of pagan and Greek religious beliefs. Notice in verse 4 after the viper bites Paul's hand, the ESV records the villagers as saying Justice (capital J) has not allowed him to live. There was this folk belief that if you survived one calamity only to face another, you must have been guilty of some sin, some wrong. The NIV translation actually makes this the clearest by adding the "goddess

Justice has not allowed Paul to live.” And then when Paul didn’t die from the snake bite, rather than a murderer, they believe him to be a god.

This is not Paul’s Jewish community. These are people obviously with a different world view and a different value system. Yet Paul engages with them. Paul and company receive their hospitality. And we don’t know, maybe he would have died on that island if these pagans did not receive him in and show him such hospitality. God works through this bunch of pagan islanders to preserve Christ’s apostle.

As Christians, we know these few short years we have on Earth are not all there is. From one perspective we could look at the whole of our lives as a sort of shipwreck among godless pagans, people who have not found truth and redemption in Jesus. How will they ever experience the goodness of God, new life in Jesus, if we don’t engage with them? Keller’s words are my prayer. Jesus, help me to be a better neighbor, a Christ-like neighbor.

## **2. Be \_\_\_\_\_ to God’s \_\_\_\_\_. (7-10)**

It’s interesting that nowhere in this passage, nowhere during the winter that Paul spent on this island, is he recorded of preaching the gospel. Not once is God mentioned or the name of Jesus mentioned.

Yet by this time, we should know Paul, shouldn’t we? When we read that Paul prayed and laid his hands on the sick father, who is Paul praying to? Jesus. Who has enabled him to heal? Jesus. It’s not recorded here, but we know Paul by now and we know he lives his life to point not to himself, but to Jesus.

So yes we must make friends with the locals during the shipwreck wherever that finds us. Engage with those around us. But for what reason? That is the question we should be asking ourselves and asking God? God, how do you want to work in me? How do you want to work through me? How do you want to work through this

situation for your glory? And let us be ready to see those God appointments and be engaged and ready to respond when God opens it up. Maybe it’s just a conversation. A word of encouragement. Or a question.

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*Are we alert and ready for however God may want to use us in the lives of those around us?*

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## **3. Don’t give up on the \_\_\_\_\_. (11-16)**

We make the most of the shipwreck, we engage with the people around us, we see God working and moving in our lives. But we never lose sight of the destination, of what God has called us to, the place He is leading us.

What a great picture we have of the church. As Paul comes to Rome, the word gets out and people from as great as 43 miles away come to see Paul. All these years of wanting to visit Rome, of wanting to meet with the Jesus followers, the church in Rome, finally he has made it, and brother and sisters come from far and wide.

As we don’t give up on the destination, let’s also not give up on being the church, the body of Christ, to others in the body who are in various parts of their journey to the destination. Shipwrecked or not, we all have the opportunity to speak life and encouragement to those around us.

Jesus proved faithful. He proved faithful to his word to Paul and he will prove faithful to his word to you. In the midst of the shipwreck, don’t lose sight of the destination. Don’t look at all of this that surrounds us and question how we will ever get over there. Stay focused on his word and don’t let go, don’t give up on the faithfulness of Jesus to his word and to you.