

In step with Jesus 155

June 1, 2025

Key Text “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Introduction

We thank God for the opportunity to come before Him again. Two weeks ago, our fellowship was postponed because we had a sick family member, but God intervened. We bless the LORD who forgives all our iniquities and heals all our diseases.

Last week we read the second half of Acts chapter 26 which recorded Paul’s trial before Agrippa and the people’s response to his personal testimony. Paul had made an eloquent appeal for the King and all that were with him to accept Jesus according to the words of the prophets, but he received no positive response from anyone in his audience. A decision was finally made to send Paul to Rome, not because they were convinced that he had done anything to deserve imprisonment or trial, but because Paul had appealed to Ceaser. Again and again, we see the Roman officials acting contrary to their personal convictions, which is evidence of the fact that while they occupied positions as governors and kings, they were not really in charge. God is the king that rules in the kingdom of men. His purposes shall stand, and He will do as He pleases.

Today we will continue reading the book of Acts. We are almost at the end. Let us start reading about Paul’s voyage to Rome as recorded in Romans 27. We shall read verses 1 to 20.

Acts 27:1-20

27 And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. ² And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. ³ The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. ⁴ And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. ⁵ And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷ We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. ⁸ Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

⁹ Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast^[a] was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” ¹¹ But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. ¹² And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

¹³ Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. ¹⁴ But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. ¹⁵ And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶ Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda,^[b] we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. ¹⁷ After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear,^[c] and thus they were driven along. ¹⁸ Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. ¹⁹ And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

Reflections

Our reading tells us that Paul was not sent off to Rome as a lonely prisoner. He was allowed to have the company of some of his friends. The author suggests that he was part of the journey, as well as Aristarchus who happened to be one of the men that followed Paul from Macedonia to Jerusalem. We also note that Paul found favor in the sight of the centurion, who allowed him to go and visit his friends in Sidon. Evidently, God was with Paul, yet his journey to Rome was not an easy one. For most of the journey, every progress they made was with great difficulty. Paul foresaw the dangers ahead and tried to dissuade them from going further from Fair Heavens, but the centurion did not pay attention to Paul, and the majority opted to go forward not knowing the dangers ahead of them.

God could have given Paul a smooth journey to Rome since He was the one sending him there, but He still allowed the storm. However, we will soon find out that the storms gave Paul the opportunity to minister to the people around him. When we walk in obedience to God's will, He never promises a smooth journey, but we can be assured that no matter what happens we shall arrive safely. All things will always work together for our good to the glory of God.