

## **In Step with Jesus 156**

**June 9, 2025**

**Key Text: “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. (Mathew 5:13)**

### **Introduction**

Today we will read the remaining part of Acts chapter 27. Last week we read that Paul had warned the sailors about the dangers of proceeding from a place called fair heavens, but they ignored him and continued. Shortly after they started their journey, the storm intensified, and they battled the storm until they lost all hope of survival. We know that God could have prevented the storm, but He did not. However, through the storm, He created opportunities for Paul to witness to those who were with him. Our reading for today will give us more insight into God's rulership in the apparent bad situations of life. We will also learn about our sacred duties as God's people to stay connected to God in every circumstance, so that God can use us as channels of His blessings no matter where we are, or what is happening to us. Let us read Acts 27: 21-42 and see what we can learn.

### **Acts 27: 21-42**

21 Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. 22 Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ 25 So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. 26 But we must run aground on some island.”

27 When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. 28 So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. 29 And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. 33 As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” 35 And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. 36 Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 We were

in all, 276 people in the ship. 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.

39 Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned, if possible, to run the ship ashore. 40 So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. 41 But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. 42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. 43 But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, 44 and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

### **Reflections**

The centurion and sailors had ignored Paul's warning, but God did not leave them to their fate. In their discouragement, God stirred up Paul to speak to them. Paul reminded them of his warning against the journey but also used that opportunity to reassure them of God's watchful care and promise to save their lives. Through Paul, God also revealed the shipwreck that was about to happen. I would like us to pay attention to the Angel's message to Paul. The message was that God had granted Paul the lives of all those who sailed with him. Just for sailing with Paul, the sailors, prisoners, and soldiers were safe. To fulfill that promise, Paul became an advisor to the centurion and a spiritual guide for the entire crew and passengers. He alerted the centurion to the sailors' intention to abandon the ship which would have led to loss of lives. He also encouraged the people on the ship to eat on the fourteenth day. Had they not eaten, they would have been too weak to swim or withstand the effect of the shipwreck and many of them may have lost their lives. God's promise was that no life will be lost, and He stationed His servant to carry out His purpose.

As we reflect on Paul's ministry at sea I wonder if God can trust us with the lives of our family members, work colleagues or neighbors? Does our presence have a positive effect wherever we are? Can people find salvation, just for being in the same environment as us? We are "the salt of the earth." Everywhere we go should be better because we have been there; not just because of the influence we exert on the people around us, but because the grace of God upon our lives rubs off on them. Therefore, we must always be spiritually alert, both for our sakes and the sakes of people around us, because sometimes their physical and spiritual safety depend on our connection with God.