

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR SHIP IS SINKING, REMEMBER ACTS 27
WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR SHIP
IS SINKING, REMEMBER ACTS 27:24

"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

During the early months of 1941, my wife and I were traveling in the upper part of the Amazon River. One day, with other tourists, we visited an Indian village. When we left the elegant cruise ship to step into the jungle, we entered another world! Some of the local people were very primitive. Their huts were crude, and the forests reached the water's edge. The arrival of such a large ship had caused great excitement. It provided the local people with the opportunity to sell their curios. Two of our party saw a homemade boat, and wanted to have their photograph taken sitting in it. They gave their camera to another visitor and asked if he would take their picture. All the people standing near were intent on watching the operation as he said, "Smile," but no one noticed the boat was sinking. Within minutes my friends were sitting in the Amazon River. Everybody laughed except the pair in the boat whose enthusiasm had been dampened!

Paul had a similar experience, but for him the event was not a cause for humor. It was terrifying. His ship had been battered by a great storm, and his prayers had apparently been in vain. The prospect of an early death was very real. Luke, the physician traveling with the apostle, wrote, "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away (Acts 27:18-20).

Amid such frightening circumstances, Paul's attitude shone like a beam from a lighthouse. For all who fear their ship is sinking, Luke's account offers help.

An Unfinished Task

God said, "Fear not, thou must be brought before Caesar." As long as a man's life is in alignment with the will of God, it is impossible for him to die until God takes him. If his ship sinks, he can only fall into the everlasting arms of God's tenderness. Many people live as prodigals and only remember God in times of acute adversity. It was not desperation that encouraged Paul to pray. It

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was total dependence upon his Heavenly Father. His perfect love for the Lord cast out the fear of imminent death.

An Unwavering Trust

An elderly lady in the Highlands of Scotland said, "If you thatch your house in the summer, you need not fear the winter." There is a great difference between trust and terror. When confronted by the same storm, the other passengers on Paul's ship became desperately afraid. They had no idea what needed to be done and no Savior from whom to seek help. On the contrary, Paul spent time in the presence of God. He who often visits the mercy seat can find the way there even in the dark! The apostle knew circumstances could never change the compassion of God. Paul believed the Lord held the oceans in His hand. If God permitted the ship to sink, He could make even that catastrophe provide for the welfare of His children.

An Unexpected Thought

The apostle said to his companions, "Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island" (Acts 27:26). He discovered that even in the

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midst of the terrible storm, God was fulfilling His purpose. The
entire tempest was only a part of a greater plan to reach people with
the Gospel. As far as Paul was concerned all things were ordered by
the Almighty, and since He was directing the operation, the future
of the sailors was assured. He did not see the threatening cloud but
rather the silver edges around it-sure evidence the sun was still
shining.

An Unmistakable Triumph

When Paul said to his shipmates, "Wherefore, sirs, be of good
cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me," he
exhibited unlimited faith (Acts 27:25). This explains the remarkable
effect upon his companions. "Then were they all of good cheer"
(Acts 27:36).

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
'Are big with mercy and will break
In blessing on your heart.

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