

ALLEY Rundown July 15-17, 2023

Today's Bible Story: The Perfect Storm (Paul Shipwrecked) • Acts 27:1–28:10

Today's Key Question: What helps you remember that God is with you?

Today's Bottom Line: When bad things happen, God is with you.

Monthly Memory Verse: *God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift.* Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)

SLIDE: Theme Background

Welcome to the Alley everyone! Quick question—have you ever had a time when something went wrong? And you got so frustrated you lost your cool?

Share a story if you have one

Has that ever happened to you? You forgot that you had homework, your phone didn't charge overnight, you accidentally sent a text to the wrong person, the food you ordered got messed up...

Allow for a few responses, positively affirming each one.

Yeah, I so get that. Things have a tendency to go wrong all the time, don't they?

So how do you deal with that? How do you stay calm when literally everything is messing up around you? How do you respond when difficult moments happen?

Those are fantastic questions. And I have a feeling that a majority of you might not be *exactly* the best when it comes to being patient. Or calm. Or peaceful. Especially when things are going wrong or when things aren't doing what they're supposed to do.

Good thing we have this. (*hold up the Bible*) This book has whole chapters devoted to this kind of thing. And even though people wrote all of this down centuries ago, we can still flip it open to letters from Paul and learn answers to help us today! Take a look...

VIDEO: The So and So Show

There is so much I love about this story. Action, adventure, shipwrecks, and miracles, but more than that, we get to see a few really important things in this story. Do you remember why Paul was headed to Rome in the first place?

Allow for responses.

Exactly. He was headed there to share the message of Jesus. You might think just because Paul was doing God's work, because Paul was going where God was sending him, that things would be smooth sailing. A complete cakewalk. Nope. Not even close. Even though God was directing Paul's steps, he still went through some *really* hard times. Just because you're walking out your faith, obeying what God is telling you, it doesn't mean that things are going to be easy.

If you think about it, those hardships actually sent Paul to places he wouldn't have gone. If that ship didn't crash on Malta, the chief official's father and all of the people on the island wouldn't have been healed. If the people listened to Paul about not sailing into bad weather because of the time of the year, the angel wouldn't have appeared, and the people wouldn't have been saved from the shipwreck.

Even when Paul finally made it back to Rome, he was still a prisoner, but that didn't stop him. Do you know he actually wrote several of the letters that are in our New Testament from prison in Rome? And he continued to share the message of Jesus boldly.

There are so many moments when Paul went through something pretty bad—okay, *really* bad—and yet he still believed that God was with him through it all. And because of this, he saw these trials in a completely different way. He saw them with hope.

I'm guessing some of you have gone through or are going through some pretty difficult stuff. And there is no getting around it—sometimes life is just plain hard. And at the time, it might make little to no sense at all. But when we are able to see these moments with a new perspective, believing that Jesus is with us and that He will never leave us, it gives us hope to see our way through our problems. It doesn't mean that it's going to be easy. It doesn't mean it won't hurt. But it *does* mean that when we're in the middle of the storm, battered on every side, we won't be alone.

"One last thought—maybe you're not going through something tough right now, but you have a friend or family member who is. Think about Luke in this story. We often focus on Paul, but do you realize that Luke wasn't a prisoner? He didn't have to go. He *chose* to. In other words, Luke went through this with Paul willingly, and I imagine that made a big difference. Do you have someone who needs you to travel with them through the storm? It won't be easy, but we won't be alone."

Let's hear our memory verse for this month, Ephesians 2:8. Say it with me.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

"God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift." (Ephesians 2:8, NIV)

Our key question today is this:

SLIDE: Key Question

What helps you remember that God is with you? When you are going through a difficult time, how can you be reminded that you are not alone? More than that, who is there with you to help batten down the hatches when the water is coming up over the side?

Let's pray and ask God to help us with this! Let's pray!"

SLIDE: Theme

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

OFFERING:

This summer, our offering money will go to families in Kenya. They are experiencing a lack of food because of an on-going drought. And the food that is available costs a LOT of money! Take a look at video of an area in Kenya called Turkana that is very rural, and the people who live there do not have much money for food.

Turkana video #1

We are working with an organization called Missions of Hope. Our money will help them make food baskets to bring to the families who live in Turkana. The food baskets will be such a blessing to the children and families in this community. If you have any offering you can bring it up now.

****AT YOUR COORDINATOR'S DIRECTION, YOU WILL EITHER DIVIDE INTO SMALL GROUPS OR DO ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.**