

2-13-22

Acts 28:1-10

In today's scripture we find the 276 survivors shipwrecked and stranded in Malta. Malta, an island 600 miles from Fair Haven, between Africa and Sicily. The ship traveled just over 42 miles in a day while caught in the storm.

Malta, it the biggest of three Islands that make up the Maltese islands, it is 20 miles long and 12 miles across and is 50 miles south of Sicily. Malta is where they would spend their winter (3 months). This would be a vacation destination for the winter months. Not that Crete (Greece) was bad, although the climate can be more humid. The average temperature is 73 degrees. (PowerPoint slide)

Read Acts 28:1-2.

Paul and the other 276 people found themselves wet, and cold. But they weren't alone, natives, KJV and other translations use the word barbarous; they are called barbarous people, because they did not, in language and customs, conform either to the Greeks or Romans.

These natives were "*unusually kind*" to the Paul and the others. They kindled (made a fire, set ablaze) a fire and made them all welcome.

I remember watching or reading a survivalist discussing that the most important thing to do in a survival, or emergency setting is to build a fire. He stated if you are lost in the woods or in that type of survival situation, build a fire.

It will be a source of heat. (Keep you warm)

It can dry your clothes if they are wet.

It can be used to draw attention to where you are.

It can be used to cook food or boil water for drinking.

It can provide protection from animals.

It will provide light in the dark.

It will give you a feeling of security, safety.

It will refocus you and can bring hope when you are feeling hopeless.

I imagine to Paul and the others that were soaked and cold, a fire was just what the doctor ordered. I bet there was even some smiles as all 276 people warmed themselves.

1. Allow others to minister when you are in need.

- When you are in survival mode you aren't necessarily thinking the most clearly. Remember, we panic.
- These unusually kind natives could have been rummaging through the wreckage washing upon the shore and seeing what treasures they could find. But they weren't they were ministering, to complete strangers.
- When you are wet, cold, shipwrecked and in shock, you need to allow others to help you.

- Sometimes the situation looks so insurmountable, but a new set of fresh eyes can help see things clearer.
- We all want God's help, right? He uses people to help.

2. **Be available/ready to minister to people in need.**

- They didn't have to help all these shipwrecked foreigners. 276 people that had been lost at sea, I can imagine the need was overwhelming.
- I am sure the natives had their own families, problems, and affairs to deal with. I bet they were super busy with their own things.
- If the natives chose to walk away or ignore the need, who would have blamed them. It takes so much to involve oneself in the needs of others.
- We can be so busy taking care of our own lives, too often we think, someone else will help. I don't have enough bandwidth. That need is too big for me. Is it? Or could it be that we don't want to be inconvenienced?

3. **Build a fire.**

- The natives got involved in the lives of Paul and the others.
- It will help warm you, dry you out and refocus you.
- **"For they rekindled a fire"** meaning there was already a fire started and they were stoking it up.
- This made me think of spring and summer campfires. When the fire starts to die down, if you move the wood around or place some fresh wood in the hot embers, it rekindles the fire.
- When we are wet, cold, stranded, shipwrecked, frustrated, alone, in a bad place, we need to build a fire. Just as the survival experts say, a fire makes all the difference for survival.
- Spiritual application: We need to be reminded of the special anointing, calling we have on our lives and light the fire of passion, remembrance, you are a child of God. Your father is THE king of kings and Lord of Lords, get up and kindle that fire. (build/stoke up the fire of the Holy Spirit, the joy of your salvation)
- Most of the time our problem isn't that the fire has gone out, it's that we aren't stoking it up, feeding it. If we would stoke it up or feed it the flames would roar again.
- It is time that this country, our community recognize that the Church is on fire with the power from the Holy Spirit. Some may not agree or have the same faith as we do, we should at least be making a difference in our area, our community, for the cause of Christ.
- We shouldn't depend on others to feed the fire; we must feed it ourselves. **"Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire," (verse 3)** If you are waiting for someone else to build the fire you need, you will be greatly disappointed. As a family in Christ we can encourage, pray, and assist all we can but each of us is responsible to tend our fire.
- We must stir up the spiritual gifts inside of us, the ones God has given us, and this will lead to feeding the fire.
- In the darkest times in his life King David encouraged himself in the Lord. **(Read Psalms 3 and 4)**
- As believers we must be proactive within our own lives, build, stoke, fan the flame when its going hot, when it's going out, whether you feel like it or not. Look to God's Word, seek His face and direction, cry out, dance, shout, exercise, whatever it takes. Do whatever it takes to stoke that fire that God placed in you at salvation.

- Don't just wait for something to happen, don't wait for someone to spark a flame, be the flame thrower, be the fire starter, set this community ablaze for God.

4. **Building/Stoking a fire comes with a cost.**

- **Read verse 3.**

- When Paul put sticks on the fire, what came out? (a snake!) How many of you are afraid of snakes?
- When God starts to move, when we get on the same page as Him, when we are in step with the Holy Ghost, when we are stoked up and fanned up by the power of God. When the fire takes off, and starts to become an inferno, that's when the devil comes in to criticize, to beat you down, tries to destroy you.

- **Read verse 4. *"No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live."***

- The unusual kind natives now become critics. None of us have ever sounded like these natives... (sarcasm)
- How do we respond when something not so good comes our way or in the path of others?

- **Read verse 5.**

- Is there any foreshadowing (prophecy) here? Paul put the serpent right where it belongs, in the flames.
- Did Paul allow a venomous snake to be a wet blanket on his fire? Nope, he shook it off. (Shake it off)

- **Read verse 6. To me this is comical. *"They stood waiting, expecting Paul's hand to swell up or suddenly fall down dead."***

- If we allow it, others, and negative situations will attempt to rain on our fire. They will watch, expecting you to fall apart, waiting to see you blow up on social media. They will get satisfaction in seeing you fall.
- These kinds of firefighters are not needed in our lives. God is always up to something, we might not know what it is, but He knows what He is doing.

- **Read verse 7. *"They had looked for a long time... they changed their minds and said that he was a god."*** (Mankind can be double minded)

- There was a cost for Paul to continue to build/stoke his fire. He didn't allow the snake or the natives to get discourage him from the task at hand.
- I can tell you that I can get discouraged. Especially when the attacks of Satan, and others come at me all at the same time. So, what have I learned when discouragement, attacks come my way?
- Get back to fire building.

I. **The F stands for faith.**

- I remind myself that it is impossible to please God without faith.

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." ESV

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ESV

Ephesians 2:8-9 "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

- No matter what comes my way, keep my faith in God, His ways, His plans, and His Word. I know that being in His will can cause complete havoc all around me. In the past two years I have learned to trust in Him more than the first 21 years.

II. The I in fire is for the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

- When we get saved, trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in our heart and conscience.
- John the Baptist said, I baptize you with water but the one who comes after me in whom shoes I am not worthy to unloosen shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire.
- Trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit. When the snake bites come, allow Him to guide you.

III. The R in fire is for Renewing, Refreshing, Revival.

- We cannot live in the past; we need a daily renewing of our faith and walk with God. We must refresh that fire that we once had. Spark a revival in our hearts, one that refreshes, renews our service.
- Every day there is a renewing, a refreshing beginning and we can grab ahold of that. Every day I need to have a revival in my heart. When I wake up my flesh is ready to rule the day. So, God's Word sends revival into my heart, purging, flushing my fleshly desires out.

IV. The E in fire is for Empower.

- The word empower means to enable, authorize power to give license to.
- God has empowered us with the power to worship Him and serve Him in truth.
- God has empowered us with the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin in our lives and draw closer to God.
- God has empowered us to be overcomers. We are not what we once were. We are not what this world and Satan says we are. God has empowered us for a bigger purpose. The work of His Son. We, born-again believers are chosen to carry on the supernatural things of God. Supernatural healing, forgiveness, love, kindness, mercy, grace, and humility.
- We need the Word of God like Jeremiah said.

Jeremiah 20:9, Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not.

- As we serve the Lord, our capacity for ministry should increase and enable us to do much more than we ever thought we could do.
- Jeremiah resolved to quit being a prophet! He decided to keep his mouth shut and not even mention the Lord to anybody. But that didn't work, because the message of God was like a burning in his heart and a fire in his bones (**Luke 24:32**)

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

- God has empowered us to live for Him and energized us that we can't stop praising Him.
- Paul had the same attitude when it came to the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:16, For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

Conclusion

Will you allow others to minister to you when you need it?

I can say our biggest need is forgiveness and salvation.

Will you minister to others when they need it?

Will you build a fire, inside you, and others? Will you stoke the fire?

If you do, it will cost you. You will come under attack. Satan and this world want us to let the fire burn out. They want us to be like the first part of Jeremiah 20:9, I will not mention Him, nor speak anymore in His name.