

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

In our last letter I promised, God willing, to write more about Paul and a shipwreck he experienced. Based on 2 Cor. 11:24 - 29 he apparently experienced a number of shipwrecks. The one we will discuss in this letter is described in Acts 27:13 - 44. Because this is a rather long passage of Scripture, I will briefly summarize the story for you with the prayer that at some point you will take the time to read the whole story from your own Bible.

- Paul had done nothing wrong, but was still a prisoner en route to Rome by ship.
- As winter approached he knew it was too dangerous to sail, but no one listened to him.
- A terrible storm descended upon them and they were driven before the wind unable to steer.
- They passed ropes under the ship trying to hold it together.
- They began throwing cargo and tackling overboard to lighten the ship.
- They had no way of knowing where they were because they had not seen the sun or stars for many days. They hadn't eaten in many days and were so discouraged that they gave up all hope of being saved.

At this point Paul said: **“Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.”** (Acts 27:21-26 KJV)

Paul believed God and encouraged everyone. How simple! How profound! Note!

- The angel of God did not appear to the owner of the ship, nor to the Roman Centurion in charge, but to Paul. Our Heavenly Father has a unique relationship with His children/;
- There were 276 people on board the ship and they were all saved because of Paul. Paul apparently prayed for them and the angel said: **“God hath given thee all them that sail with thee”**.
- While the people on the ship were lost and confused, God was not! God not only knew where they were, He directed the winds so that their ship would land on a “certain island” where Paul would preach and heal many.

What God did through Paul helps to point out what he can do through you.

- God had a plan for Paul from his mother's womb (Gal. 1:15), and God just may also have a plan for you from your mother's womb.

- Paul described himself as the worst of sinners (1 Tim . 1:15). While you may not be the worst of sinners, God can still use the mistakes in your life for His glory.
- The story of Paul’s conversion is found 3 times in the Bible (Acts 9, 22, and 26). Witnessing was not hard for Paul for he simply kept telling the story of the difference Jesus made in his life. We can witness in the same way.
- Paul was not only commissioned to witness, but also to suffer (Acts 9:15, 16). Do not be afraid God’s calling in your life, nor of suffering. If you “believe God” you can even rejoice in your sufferings (Rom. 5:3).
- Because Paul “believed God” he was not disobedient to this heavenly vision (Acts 26:19). If we “believe God” we will also do precisely what He commands us to do.
- Not long before this shipwreck Paul wrote to the Romans: **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28)**. The devil is powerless to stop God!

I met a man some years ago near Aldama, Mexico. Both of his parents were in prison for drug related crimes, and he was himself born in prison. His parents brain washed him into believing that there was no hope for him. At first, he followed in their steps, but at the age of 18 someone convinced him believe Christ and not his parents. What he believed enabled him to become a great soul winner and witness for Christ. It does matter what you believe!

Because Paul believed God he was optimistic even in the most discouraging of circumstances.

- He was singing in prison (Acts 16:25).
- When on trial in a corrupt court he considered himself fortunate (Acts 26:2).
- His prison letters are filled with references to joy (Phil. 1:4, 25, 26; 2:2, 29, Phile. 7 Etc.)
- He considered his suffering for Christ to only be a light affliction (2 Cor. 4:17).’
- He even faced death with happiness because he believed that God would reward him for his faithfulness (2 Tim. 4:6 - 8).

Because Paul believed God the 275 people without hope suddenly became encouraged. Paul’s optimism was contagious. Because they too came to believe God they ate some food to give them strength (Acts 27:36, 37). Because they believed God they leaped into the sea and swam to shore with confidence. Just like Paul predicted, not one of them was lost! What you believe makes a difference in what you achieve.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce