

Trusting God in the Storm

Acts 27:1; 9-12; 27; 33-38

5/24/26

On Tuesday, 15 students completed confirmation class confessing their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Next Sunday, you will witness them make their confession. Joshua did such a fantastic job with the Jr. High Lock-In, in which 36 6th-8th graders attended, that it was still all the talk this week. Some students envision the Lock-In beginning Thursday night, and then maybe Pastor Curtis could write a school excuse for Friday for a service project like Westmoreland Food Bank, then another service project on Saturday finishing with worship Sunday morning! I replied, "What your describing sounds like a mission trip!" Being together serving Christ.

On the Church's birthday, Christ's Holy Spirit is moving at NPC! Joshua makes youth group impactful and fun.

But as we read in Acts 27, following Jesus does not eliminate hardship. Following Jesus with the Church enables us to endure hardship well. "With the Church!" is the emphasis. This confirmation class is realizing Church is better together. Jesus made us to be together. To face hardship together. Friends, Paul is on a mission to spread the Good News of Jesus to the ends of the earth. And he is the one who reminds us, "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ!"-Galatians 6:2

Look to verses 34-38, Paul uses his hardship to witness to the presence of Christ. He encourages his fellow shipmates. He celebrates communion with Jesus, and then he feeds the 276 people on the ship.

Paul's mission from Jesus is to spread the good news to the ends of the earth. In doing so, Paul faces hardship, storms, persecution. Paul sails to Rome to face the emperor. As we set sail to embark on the vision Jesus has for our future, God's Word reminds us that following Jesus does not eliminate hardship.

Acts 28:11-16; 23-31

God's presence is not proven by comfort, but by faithfulness. If tradition is accurate, Paul is executed in Rome in 64AD. He arrives in Rome as a prisoner in 61AD. The last three years of Paul's life is under house arrest. God's presence is not proven by comfort, but by faithfulness. He uses his time to witness.

Many today in this room face hardship, have cancer, lost a job, lost a loved one, may simply be in a stormy period of life. God's presence is not proven by comfort, but by faithfulness. Will you use your time to witness? Christ's Holy Spirit leads Paul to write "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ!"-Galatians 6:2 Facing life's storms are better together.

Paul is the originator that there is hope for humanity in Jesus Christ, but this message, the message of Christ is what gets him in trouble. Even in chaos and loss, steady trust becomes a powerful witness.

On the Church's birthday let us celebrate that there is hope for humanity in Jesus Christ. This message we get from Paul. Paul writes almost half of the books of the New Testament. By word count, Paul writes 25% of the New Testament. Recalling Paul's life reminds us that following of Jesus includes hardship. Paul was born around the same time as Jesus. When Jesus was crucified around 33AD, Paul took it upon himself to try to destroy the church. The Resurrected Jesus appears to Paul a few years after the first Easter and Paul then dedicates his life to spread the Good News of Jesus. For 30 years,

Paul faces beatings, persecutions, jail-time and his final years are under house arrest for proclaiming there is hope for humanity in Jesus Christ.

Hear Paul's witness as we celebrate the Church's birthday, "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³ because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg of you to listen to me patiently.

⁴ "All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. ⁵ They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. ⁶ And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, ⁷ a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, Your Excellency, that I am accused [!]! ⁸ Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

⁹ "Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. ¹¹ By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme, and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

¹² "With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³ when at midday along the road, Your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. ¹⁴ When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. ¹⁷ I will rescue you from your people and from the gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

¹⁹ "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision ²⁰ but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. ²¹ For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²² To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: ²³ that the Messiah must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the gentiles."

²⁴ While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, “You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!” ²⁵ But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. ²⁶ Indeed, the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely, for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. ²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸ Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?” ²⁹ Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

In turbulent times, steady trust becomes a powerful witness.

Where am I tempted to lose hope?

What would it look like to trust God in the middle of uncertainty?

Grace and peace,
Pastor Curtis

Theme: Even in chaos and loss, God is present and faithful.

Sermon Notes:

1. Following Jesus does not eliminate hardship.
2. God’s presence is not proven by comfort, but by faithfulness.
3. In turbulent times, steady trust becomes a powerful witness.
4. Where am I tempted to lose hope?
5. What would it look like to trust God in the middle of uncertainty?