

Riding Out a Storm-- Part 1

Good morning, and welcome to our closing chapters in the Book of Acts.

Today's message is titled, "Riding Out a Storm, Part 1." A good subtitle in light of any vacation plans you or your family may have is, ***Travel That Can Change Your Life.***



Celebrating a long lawsuit with Hewlett Packard, Brit, Mike Lynch and his family boarder their \$40M yacht called "Baysian" (named after the famous Greek mathematician, Thomas Bayes). The Lynch Family was celebrating a long-awaited corporate lawsuit victory with their daughter and their most business associates -- the best days of their lives lay ahead.



The weather report off Sicily on August 19, 2024 indicated an approaching storm. There were 22 souls on board. A local fisherman witnessed something he had never seen before-- at 3:55 a.m., "a mini tornado arrived and headed towards the Bayesian yacht."

Anchored 500 meters off Sicily, the Bayesian was unsinkable. In less than a minute, the Bayesian sank. Sixteen of the twenty-two passengers survived. Notably, Mike and his Oxford-bound daughter, Hannah did not survive the storm.

Trust the Master of the Storm

Our story in Acts predates this Mike Lynch Family tragedy by almost 2,000 years, but the dangerous open water conditions of the Mediterranean are the same.

Context

- Luke's is narrating God's plan to get Paul from Caesarrea to Rome.

- Luke is connecting dots to the Prophet Jonah, who like Paul is being sent through the unpredictable Mediterranean Sea to a Gentile capitol-- Nineveh for Jonah and Rome for Paul.
- In the last few chapters of Acts, Paul outlasted the two-year Roman statute of limitation allowing his Jewish accusers two years to bring charges to the Roman Government. Paul "appealed to Caesar."
- This is Paul's fourth missionary journey to Rome-- as a prisoner, with his friends!



WHY THIS MATTERS:

- Storms come and we have little or no control
- Storms come when we are already in a difficult season
- Storms are not difficult to spot if we are looking
- Storms are powerful, violent, frightening, and temporary

Pastor Curt Harlow, Bayside Auburn

Paul Sails for Rome

27 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some **other prisoners** were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. ²We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was **with us**.

- Julius, the centurion, was authorized by Emperor Augustus to commandeer any ship.
- Paul is among other prisoners that are making their way to be figurines in the games of the Roman Coliseum.
- Luke notes that Aristarchus of Thessalonica was with them, whom Paul will call a "fellow prisoner" (Col. 1:10) and "fellow worker" (1:24).

³The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to **go to his friends** so they might provide for his needs.

- Paul's relational intelligence while riding a storm results in dividends. The Lord makes it possible for him to "go to his friends." Julius took a huge risk to allow this. If Paul were to escape, Julius would lose his life.
- So the vibe on this small coastal uber ship is one of trust.

⁴From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the **winds were against us**. ⁵When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

-baseball mit-tea-um, Tyra, Snidus, Sal-mon-ae, La-Sea

- Continuing northwest along the coast of Asia, the smaller uber vessel landed in Myra in Lycia.
- Julius found an Alexandrian grain ship headed towards Italy, and put the prisoners aboard.



H. N. Olympias (similiar to the Alexandrian)

- Now, the infamous Northeasterner winds are running down the bluffs onto the Sea. The Sea has always had a Sheol connotation-- where the dead lie. And because few people knew how to swim, just as we observe in modern Mediterranean immigration, nerves were up among the crew of 273.
- The result is not workable.

The Anatomy of a Storm

- Winter storms in the Mediterranean are caused by the interaction of cold, dry air masses from the north, that collide with warmer, moist air masses from the Mediterranean Sea.



⁹ Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was **after the Day of Atonement**. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰ “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and **bring great loss** to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.” ¹¹ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. ¹² Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, **the majority decided** that we should sail on, **hoping** to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest. Acts 27:1–12 (NIV)



- The Day of Atonement was October 5th. So now we're in mid-October, and it's dangerous. Paul, a seasoned passenger on multiple trips across the Mediterranean, voices his concern. The centurion listens to the pilot and the owner. The pilot wants to get home (comfort). The owner wants to sell his grain (money). And what about the passengers?
- Paul's confidence that the Lord is getting him to Rome is not without doubt. We will find that an angel of the Lord will appear to Paul and encourage him that he will get to stand before Caesar. As tough and seasoned as Paul is, he's not without doubt. Remember, he said he was often "in danger at sea" and shipwrecked three times (2 Cor. 11:25-26). And, he is concerned about the overall welfare of the ship, the cargo, and every passenger. Other prisoners might appreciate the variables of the storm that could result in their release.
- The crew just wants to get home. It's one thing in modern travel to miss your flight and have to spend the night in local hotel. It's quite another thing to be

forced have to hang out with 273 passengers through winter. That's an excruciating international terminal experience.

- What's the Lord doing? The Lord is no doubt using Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus to share the Gospel with their captive audience. What an amazing opportunity!

THREE STORM PROCEDURES

Trust the Master of the storm and...

1. Accept the season that you're in

⁴ From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the **winds were against us**.

HOW? Talk to God more than you talk to others.

Trust the Master of the storm and...

2. Control what you can control

¹⁰ "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and **bring great loss** to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." ¹¹ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the **pilot** and of the **owner** of the ship.

When to speak up...

- When there is danger
- When others are defenseless
- When the Spirit prompts you

Pastor Curt Harlow, Bayside Auburn

HOW? Talk to the right person

Trust the Master of the storm and...

3. Beware of group think

¹² Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, **the majority decided** that we should sail on, **hoping** to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

Group Think is when a group prioritizes harmony over honesty.

The truth, EVEN WHEN VERY OBVIOUS, can be hard to accept. We are riddled with insecurities or what JHames calls, "the battles within" (Jas. 4:2) that give us the ability to deny even the most obvious signs.

Freedom is the ability to see a storm coming.

Pastor Curt Harlow, Bayside Auburn

If group think has taken over your cruise, your team, your family, what would you do in the meantime? You're spending winter with these people! What's going to bring you the most joy?

AND IN THE MEANTIME? Rest and B.L.E.S.S. your fellow passengers and introduce them to the Master of the storm-- Jesus

Travel often pulls people away from the pressures, lets them get a fresh perspective on their lives, forces them to face and surmount fears or discomforts, and enables them to experience the rejuvenation that comes from times of relaxation. Jeffrey Kottler, *Travel That Can Change Your Life*

Jesus Calms the Storm

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Mark 4:35-41 (NIV)

Trust the Master of the Storm

Notes

Last month, while visiting with my sister-in-law, she told me that while standing with her dad, Mr. Goins, Pappaw, her father who was going to give her away and her officiant, he said, "You don't have to do this. You can leave right now." Marriage and family life presents storms that we will go through. Mr. Goins just wanted to give Aunt Michelle, Melissa's twin sister an opportunity to deboard-- now!

While writing this, I'm prompted to ask Melissa is she was given the same warning. Maybe it will a Mother's Day lunch topic!