



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

God in the Storms of Life Series, Lesson 57

Lesson Title: Safe on an Island

Take Home Point: Follow God and expect him to do amazing things.

Warm-Up:

Our family always enjoys giving gifts to each other; occasionally we try to do something unusual in giving the gift, just to add to the fun. One of our favorite ways to do this is to have the recipient follow a trail of clues to reach the hiding place where they will find the gift. My son did this with his sister during our Christmas gift giving last year. First she opened the package, which contained a note telling her to go downstairs and look under the chess set. Of course, under the chess set was a note telling her to go to another location. This continued throughout the house until finally, after six notes, she reached the spot of her gift – right behind the sofa on which she was sitting! It was fun. She didn't know where the next step would take her; but she knew that if she followed the instructions she could expect something special just for her.

Read: Acts 28:1-10 and Mark 16:15-19

Observation (What happened?):

What was the reaction of the Maltese when the snake bit Paul?

What did God do for the people of Malta through Paul? How did they respond?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How do you think the initial kindness of the Maltese was returned upon them?

Why do you think Paul reacted so calmly to the snakebite? (Hint – review last week's lesson.)

Insight:

The focus of this Bible Event is usually on Paul and the miraculous way he was unharmed by the snakebite. And that really is an amazing act of God. But in focusing on Paul, sometimes the people of Malta are left in the background, yet it was their initial kindness to a shipwrecked crew and passengers that brought healing to sick people across the island. They showed their kindness before knowing anything about God's ways, but it led to amazing things. And I believe we can be confident that not only did God use Paul to heal their sick, he also used Paul to teach them about Jesus so they could follow him, too. Before the shipwreck, the Maltese had never heard of Jesus, yet the Holy Spirit was there, preparing them for Paul's arrival in a most unusual way. Isn't that just like God? His merciful kindness is everywhere, and when we follow him we can see the amazing things he does with eyes now open to spiritual reality. Not only can we see them, we can expect them, knowing he is the loving Almighty God who does amazing things.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How has God demonstrated his kindness to you recently through others? Have you thanked him for his kindness?

Consider how you can show the kindness of God to someone this week, then do it.