



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions God in the Storms of Life Series, Lesson 56

Lesson Title: Paul is Shipwrecked

Take Home Point: God gives courage to face the storms of life.

Warm-Up:

Have you heard of the great hymn *It Is Well With My Soul*? This hymn was written in 1873 by a gentleman named Horatio Spafford after two major traumas in his life. The first was the terrible Chicago fire of October 1871, which ruined him financially (he had been a wealthy businessman). Shortly thereafter, while crossing the Atlantic, all four of Spafford's daughters died in a collision with another ship. Spafford's wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone." Several weeks later, as Spafford's own ship passed the spot where his daughters died, the Holy Spirit inspired these words. His pain and trouble were beyond what I've experienced, but he relied on God for the courage to face it all.

Read: Acts 27 and Isaiah 41:13

Observation (What happened?):

Why did the shipwreck occur?

What was the first thing the angel told Paul?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

How do you think the sailors and soldiers reacted to Paul's assurance that no lives would be lost?

Why do you think God spared all the lives onboard?

Insight:

What did the angel say to Paul? "Do not be afraid." You know, we live in a sinful world. We will experience troubles caused by our own actions and also by the consequences of the actions of others. And these troubles may make us feel overwhelmed. It is not wrong to feel overwhelmed by the troubles, difficulties, and adversities we face. Jesus himself gave a glimpse of feeling this way in the garden just before his arrest. Read Luke 22:39-43 to get an idea of his anguish. The key point to remember is that faith cannot follow your feelings; your feelings must follow your faith. Then God gives you the courage to face your situation. By turning to him for strength, you honor him when your faith is demonstrated to others around you, just as happened with Paul on the ship. God also teaches and shapes your heart. You learn humility by your recognition of powerlessness and your dependence on him and others. You learn compassion for others in their troubles. You get better at seeing the spiritual realm. God promises courage and strength for each moment and an assurance of his presence. Do not be afraid.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What stormy part of life are you facing? Where is your courage coming from?

Pray for the children in your small group to understand that troubles will come, but God gives courage to get them through.