

099 - God Takes His Servant All the Way - Acts 28:11-16

Call to Worship: Psalm 92:1-4

Scripture Reading: Ezra 7:6-10

Sermon: "God Takes His Servant All the Way" Acts 28:11-16

Benediction: Philippians 1:6

By God's will, His servant Paul, along with fellow servants Luke and Aristarchus, are on a long journey from Caesarea, on the coast of Judea, near Jerusalem, across the Mediterranean sea to Rome. We have already considered two stages of Paul's journey:

1. The Lord keeps His servant safe in a storm and a shipwreck
2. The Lord blesses His servant after a shipwreck

Today we consider the last stage of Paul's long journey to Rome. We see here that through storm and shipwreck, the Lord Jesus Christ takes His servant all the way to his destination.

It had long been Paul's purpose to get to Rome as a witness for Christ (A.D. 55 to 57)

Rom 1:9-13 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, (10) making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. (11) For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established-- (12) that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. (13) Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

The Lord God had told Paul that indeed he would go to Rome as a witness for Christ

Act 23:11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

Since Paul had written that letter stating his purpose, it had been at least three years; two of those years he had been in prison at Caesarea; several months he had been travelling by sea, which included being shipwrecked. But Paul found that the Lord was faithful to take him all the way to Rome.

If you are a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you purpose to do the very things that the Lord God has told us in His Word to do, you will find that God takes His servant all the way.

e.g. If you are a husband or a wife, and you have purposed to be faithful, you will find that the Lord will take you all the way.

e.g. If you are a father or mother

e.g. If you are a church pastor

e.g. Most generally, if you are a Christian, and it is your purpose to follow the Lord Jesus Christ faithfully all the way until He comes back or until you die, whichever comes first, you will find that the Lord takes His servant all the way.

Read the text: Acts 28:11-16

The Lord takes His servant all the way

I. sometimes in a ship of the pagans (11)

A. Greek literally “Zeus sons,” Castor and Pollux, who had become the patron gods of sailors

B. We certainly are not to love the things of this world, or to have fellowship with darkness.

C. But we live this whole life in this world; we are not to be of it, but we undoubtedly are in it; if we tried to remain entirely apart in every way from pagans, we would have to just leave this planet; sometimes in God’s providence He takes us along in a ship belonging to the pagans and marked with their idolatry

D. Consider that these pagans wisely wintered on this island; they were granted wisdom as to the affairs of this life, but it was for the benefit of the servants of Christ!

E. APPLICATION

Let us not be overly concerned that institutions we use be Godly. Can you imagine Paul saying, “I will not get on that ship. I’ll wait for a Jewish ship to come by.” or “I’ll wait for a Christian ship to come by.” or “I’ll not get aboard until you remove those pagan symbols from the prow.”

you may be working in a company controlled by pagans

you may be driving a car built by pagans

you may be paying your bills with money printed by pagans

Let us pray, “Dear Lord, thank You for this pagan ship on which I am riding!”

II. sometimes with favorable wind (13)

A. The Lord gives His servants times when favorable winds carry us

B. He knows when we need them.

C. He is a kind, generous father, and loves to give good gifts to His children

D. Not only favorable winds are God’s perfect providence, but sometimes unfavorable, too!

E. Consider that the pagans were being carried to their destination by this favorable wind, but it was for the benefit of Jesus Christ’s servants!

III. sometimes with the hospitality of brethren (14)

Would you please stay a week?

Why seven days? If we let the scriptures point us, we get this:

Acts 20:6-7 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread,

and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

It is a blessing to host visiting Christians for a whole week, especially in order to worship together. Let us be ones who invite guests for a week and stay for a week if possible!

IV. sometimes by a long walk (14b)

Apparently the ship was bound for Puteoli, not any farther north, so the passengers disembarked there.

Puteoli to Rome was about 170 miles

The Lord gave Paul the strength to do it

The Lord blessed Paul with the opportunity to do it

V. sometimes with encouragement by brethren (15)

A. Paul was emotional, just like everyone else. He became discouraged in his troubles sometimes.

2Co 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

B. Paul had done the encouraging many times, with many words

C. Now the Lord encouraged Him through the other believers in Christ

1. Appiiforum 51 miles from Rome; Three Taverns 28 miles from Rome

2. Paul had companionship for these last 50 miles of walking

3. Paul entered Rome like a conquering hero

D. APPLICATION

Heb 10:23-25 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (24) And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, (25) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

E. These believers were faced with a more challenging situation when Paul needed encouragement, and they did not stand with him

2Ti 4:16-18 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. (17) But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. (18) And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

1. Let us be faithful encouragers in the worst times

2. Let us depend ultimately on the Lord for encouragement, not on men

If you are a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you purpose to do the very things that the Lord God has told us in His Word to do, you will find that God takes His servant all the way.

VI. with favor from other people (16a)

The Lord is able to make anyone favorable to His servants

Consider that if the journey had been all smooth sailing, what would Julius have had to say about Paul? Not much, I suppose, and Paul may have been thrown in a common prison. But through the storm and shipwreck, Julius came to understand that Paul was far from being a criminal, and so he was able to speak to the commanders in Rome, and have Paul assigned to custody in a private home.

VII. sometimes with freedom even in prison (16b)

A. He is under arrest, even though it is only house arrest; he has a Roman soldier in the house guarding him all the time

B. Think of what Christ's servant is free from

Is a fellow prisoner going to harm him?

Are the Jews going to harm him?

Will common criminals break in and harm him?

C. He is free to witness to the Roman soldiers!

D. He is free to encourage the Roman Christians

Php 1:12-14 But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, (13) so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; (14) and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.