

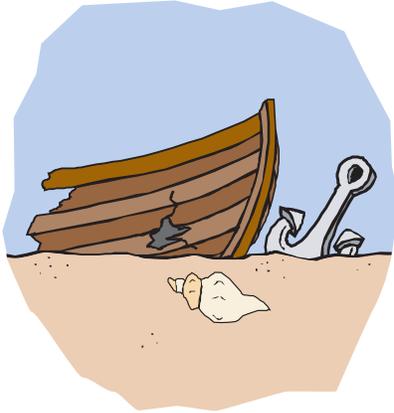


Shipwrecked

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Acts 27 - 28

Paul's life was one of the most adventure-some of anyone who ever lived. If his life were a movie, few people would believe it was a true story. But it was true! A life lived fully trusting in God is the most exciting and fun-filled life possible.



Day #1: Firm Plans

God had a definite plan for Paul. God announced that Paul would preach to the Jews, the non-Jews, and their kings (Acts 9:15). From the time Paul was being formed as a tiny baby, God knew Paul and had a plan for his life.

✝ *You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in Your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. - Psalm 139:16*

And God made sure that His plan for Paul came to pass. Nothing can stop God's plans. His plans stand firm forever (Psalm 33:11).

When Paul put His trust in Jesus, he first began preaching to the Jews in and around Jerusalem. Then God sent Paul out on a mission trip to speak in other cities to people who were not Jews. Finally, God sent Paul on a trip that placed him in front of governors and kings.

Did God fulfill His plan for Paul? God took Paul through Satan's attacks, jail, several beatings, a hurricane, shipwrecks, a snakebite, and more! None of those hardships could stop God's plan.

✱ Do you think that if God had a plan for Paul, he might have a plan for you? Yes He does! (Jeremiah 29:11). What are some things that seem like hardships in your life? Can any of those things stop God's plan for your life? Certainly not! Nothing can stop God's plan. When you face something difficult, read Psalm 33:11.

Day #2: In His Footsteps

Mom or dad, place small strips of paper on the floor. Make sure your child can step from one paper to the other easily. Make the path turn left and right. Now ask your child to walk on the path you have laid out, being careful only to step where you have placed a paper.

This path is very much like Paul's life after he met Jesus. From that moment on, he went only where God led him. He traveled everywhere that God wanted him to go. He did not go where God's Spirit told him not to go (Acts 16:6-7).

✝ *The Lord directs a man's steps. - Proverbs 20:24a*

And God was with Paul every step of the way! From a jail cell to a Caesar's palace, everything Paul did *for* God he did *with* God. Because of Paul's complete trust in God, he experienced God. Paul came to know the heart of God.

Paul is an "open book" to us. We know Paul's heart and mind because God used Paul to write many books in the Bible. Grab your Bible and open to Romans. Keep a paper or your finger in Romans, and turn to Philemon. God used Paul to write all the pages from Romans through Philemon. Paul's writings teach us so much about living the kingdom life. Paul speaks of faith and obedience, trials and fruit, love and sacrifice. More than anything, Paul talks about the grace that God poured out on him.

✱ Study God's word and listen for His leading. Just like Paul, step only where God leads you. You might be amazed at where you end up!

Day #3: Leave Your Mark

What was the last trip you went on? Did you buy a souvenir? Souvenirs are great because they help us remember the places we've been. But more important than what you *take* from a place is *what you leave behind*.

Did you know that you leave your fingerprints everywhere you go? When you touch a glass, or a doorknob, or your desk at school, your

Day #3 continued:

fingerprints remain. It is nearly impossible *not* to leave a fingerprint.

When Paul and his friends traveled all over the world, they left the truth of Jesus with the people there. It was clear that Paul and the apostles had been in a city because some people there began to follow Jesus. Those new believers were like the spiritual "fingerprints" left by Paul, Silas, Barnabas, Peter, and others.

Just as everyone leaves their fingerprints wherever they've been, it should be natural for believers to leave behind kindness, encouragement, joy, love, and the truth about Jesus.

 *God's gifts of grace come in many forms. Each of you has received a gift in order to serve others. You should use it faithfully. If you speak, you should do it like one speaking God's very words. If you serve, you should do it with the strength God provides. Then in all things God will be praised through Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 4:10-11a*

 Make a fingerprint by coloring a small amount of washable marker on your fingertip, and press it against some paper. Remember to leave spiritual "fingerprints" wherever you go. Each evening, ask the Lord, "What did I leave behind today?"

Day #4: Miracles

It was a miracle that Paul and every other passenger survived the shipwreck. And when a poisonous snake bit Paul, the island people were certain he would die instantly (Acts 28:6). They knew what kind of snake it was - and it was deadly. But Paul did not die. The venom didn't harm him one bit. This was also a miracle!

 *God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. - Acts 19:11*

God allowed Paul to heal many people (Acts 28:8-9). At one point, people would bring cloth and touch it to Paul. Then they would bring the cloth to a sick person and the person would be made well (Acts 19:11-12). Paul even raised a man from the dead! (Acts 20:9-10)

God performed these miracles for a reason. He stated the reason back in Exodus when He was rescuing His people from Pharaoh in Egypt.

*You can tell (your children) I did great miracles among the people of Egypt. **And all of you will***

Day #4 continued:

know that I am the Lord." - Exodus 10:2b

In Paul's day, as in Moses' day, God performed miracles so that those who saw them would listen to God's messenger and learn who God is. He is the great "I AM." He created everything, and He can do anything. He is worthy of great respect and honor. His message is truth. He is able and willing to save people from their sin.

Jesus said that the miracles He performed gave evidence that He was sent from God. He did miracles so people would listen to His message of forgiveness (John 14:11).

 Don't be afraid to pray for a miracle, so that God's power can be seen. God still makes Himself known through performing miracles.

Day #5: Intertwined

We have seen that God had a specific plan for Paul. But did you know that God's plan for Paul was also God's plan for many other people?

God planned for Paul to preach to the Jews in Jerusalem. So God's plan for the Jews in Jerusalem was to hear the truth preached by Paul. God planned for Paul to preach to the people in Malta. God's plan for the people in Malta was to hear truth preached by Paul. God's plan for Paul was to preach the truth to Caesar. God's plan for Caesar was to hear the truth from Paul.

God's plans for people are not separate plans. God's plan is a kingdom plan, and amazingly, it all works together for good.

 *And we know that God causes everything to **work together** for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them. - Romans 8:28*

And let's not forget: God's plan for Paul was for him to write many books in the Bible. God's plan for **you** is to learn about the heart of God from those very books!

 Play a game of "pick up sticks" with a handful of toothpicks. (Drop them all together in a pile - make sure they are all touching each other. Now try to move one without moving any of the others!) Notice how each stick affects all the others. The plan God has laid out for YOU is intertwined with the plans He has for other people.