

Storms and God's Plan

"Therefore, take courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island." (Acts 27:25–26)

In verse 10 earlier in the passage, Paul warned that this voyage would result in danger to life and loss of property. However, unlike his usual manner, he did not engage in active argument with those responsible who failed to take seriously his warning about the hardships that lay ahead. And just as he had foretold, even in the desperate situation caused by violent winds and raging seas, he proclaimed the word of God and informed them that there was hope. Why did he take such an attitude?

The Onslaught of the Violent Storm

They began the voyage toward Crete with caution. As a precaution, they dragged anchors along the sea bottom to control the ship's speed. When a favorable wind arose, they hoisted the anchors and increased speed. But before long, a violent wind swept down, making it impossible to control the ship artificially, and they were forced to let the ship be driven along by the storm.

They barely passed a small island called Cauda and secured the lifeboat tightly to the ship to prevent it from colliding with the hull and being damaged. To avoid running aground on sandbars, they lowered the ship's gear and took every possible measure to lighten the ship by throwing cargo and equipment overboard. Yet, realizing that they could not escape the storm, they fell into helpless despair.

A Lesson from Mistakes

Addressing the exhausted passengers, sailors, the shipowner, the captain, and the centurion—worn out from severe seasickness and hunger due to lack of food—Paul rebuked them, saying that if they had listened to him and not set sail from Crete, they would have avoided this damage and loss. We too can make unwanted mistakes because we cannot accurately predict the future. Nevertheless, there must be an evaluation of mistakes. Through post-event reflection, future mistakes can be prevented to some extent.

Proclaiming God's Plan in the Midst of the Storm

As mentioned earlier, Paul set aside the hardships caused by the previous wrong decision and delivered a message of hope. He declared that none of them would lose their lives, though the ship would be destroyed. Although the pursuit of profit they had intended was reduced to nothing, he urged them to take courage, for their lives would be spared. He proclaimed this with certainty because it was God's will, and therefore it would surely come to pass, leading

everyone to trust his words. As proof, he said that all who were aboard the ship would be cast ashore on an island.

Reflection

Paul's life was in God's hands. God's plan and purpose are firm and unshakable. Neither Jews nor Gentiles, nor even the untamed forces of the sea, could hinder the path of the messenger established by the risen Lord. Moreover, those who were on the ship with that messenger would inevitably experience God's work—accomplished through His servant. According to God's plan and purpose, they would be cast ashore on an island.

The life of a Christian is similar to Paul's life. God's will and purpose will be fulfilled through us, and those who are with us will also participate as witnesses in that remarkable process. Our lives are in God's hands. God's plan and purpose through us will surely be fulfilled.

“Finally then, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to walk and please God—just as you are doing—that you do so more and more.” (1 Thessalonians 4:1)