Paul August 8

Sails for Rome

Paul and the other prisoners were handed over to Julius, an officer of “The Emperor’s Regiment” Paul was treated well by Julius – The next day they arrived in Sidon. Julius was kind to Paul and allowed him to go and see his friends, to be given what he needed. Acts 27:3.

From Sidon they sailed on the sheltered side of Cyprus, then onto Myra. Here Paul changed boats, from there they sailed, slowly against the wind to Cnidus, then down to Crete, staying on the sheltered side by Cape Salmone to Safe Harbors, it was late September, to travel farther would be dangerous, so Paul advised – “Men, I see our voyage from here on will be dangerous; there will be great damage to the cargo and to the ship, and loss of life as well.” Acts 27:10.

They didn’t listen to Paul and sailed on for Phoenix to spend the winter there but the wind blew off the island, forcing the boat away from land, with only a brief shelter from Cauda Island but then back to sea again.

Our lives sometimes are like this boat in the wind, tossed, then sheltered, only to be tossed again. Christians have a safe and secure harbor, not only for the winter but for eternity, if we put our lives in the Lord’s hands.

VERSE FOR TODAY: A soft wind from the south began to blow, and the men thought that could carry out their plan, so they pulled up the anchor and sailed as close as possible along the coast of Crete. Acts 27:13.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to always be sheltered in your love, thank-you for never leaving me to the winds of time.

To Rome August 9

Shipwreck!

The wind blew relentlessly, they secured the lifeboat and lowered the sail, they were afraid of being blown aground by Libya. During the storm they threw cargo and ship’s equipment overboard – For many days we could not see the sun or the stars, and the wind kept on blowing very hard. We finally gave up all hope of being saved. Acts 27:20.

Paul gave an “I told you so” speech about leaving Crete but then went onto tell them that they would be safe because an angel told Paul of the impending shipwreck but that all those sailing with him would be safe. Some became afraid and abandoned ship, ending up lost.

Two weeks had passed since they had any food to eat, Paul said – “… I beg you, then, eat some food; you need it in order to survive. Not even a hair of your heads will be lost.” After saying this, Paul took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, broke it, and began to eat. Acts 27:34-35. To lighten the load they threw the rest of the grain overboard.

At dawn they tried to steer the ship to an unknown coast, but it ran aground and broke apart. The soldiers were going to kill the prisoners but the officer saved their lives, the whole group got to shore safely.

We must not abandon the ship of the Lord, for we will be lost too.

VERSE FOR TODAY: “…But now I beg you, take heart! Not one of you will lose his life; only the ship will be lost…” Acts 27:22.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, Dear Lord, for passage through this life during rough weather and smooth sailing.

Paul August 10

Friendly Natives

When they arrived safely to shore by swimming, and floating on planks from the ship, they found themselves in Malta. The native citizens built a fire for them to dry off, when Paul put a bundle of wood on the fire, a snake came out of the heat and grabbed onto Paul’s hand, Paul just shook it off with no ill effects – They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after waiting a long time and not seeing anything unusual happening to him, they changed their minds and said, “He is a god!” Acts 28:6.

Publius was the chief ruler of the island, he kept the group in his home for three days, Paul prayed and laid his hand on Publius’ father and healed him of fever and dysentery – When this happened, all the other sick people on the island came and were healed. Acts 28:9.

Three months went by, when finally they were ready to sail on a ship form Alexandria that had wintered in Malta, the Maltin’s outfitted the ship for the voyage to Italy.

They made some stops, believers welcomed Paul along the route, and they arrived in Rome after about two weeks.

The Maltin’s set a good example for us to follow, to welcome strangers into our homes and make them comfortable. We can also aid people we cannot welcome into our homes, the homeless and starving through organizations created to help them.

VERSE FOR TODAY: They gave us many gifts and when we sailed, they put on board what we needed for the voyage. Acts 28:10.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to always be a tuned to others and their needs let me help them to the best of my ability.

Paul August 11

A Day’s Work

Paul was allowed to live in a rented room, under guard. After three days Paul invited the Jewish leaders of Rome to meet with him. Paul told them how the Jewish people of Jerusalem had him arrest and even thought the Romans could find nothing to hold him on the Jews forced him to appeal to the Emperor. The Roman Jews were surprised to hear of Paul’s dilemma because they had no letters or visitors with any bad news of Paul and they were eager to hear Paul’s ideas.

They set aside a day and Paul spent the entire day trying to convince them about Jesus. As usual some believed but others could not be convinced. They left arguing among themselves; Paul sited how Isaiah had hit on the truth-

For he said ‘Go and say to this people: You will listen and listen but not understand; you will look and look, but not see, because this people’s minds are dull and they have stopped up their ears and closed their eyes…

And Paul concluded: “You are to know, then, that God’s message of salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen!” Acts 28:26, 27a, 28.

We must always be mindful that if the Jews would have been receptive to the message of salvation, we Gentiles would perhaps never been offered a chance at eternal life, keep your minds and hearts open to God’s message.

VERSE FOR TODAY: He preached about the Kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ speaking with all boldness and freedom. Acts 28:31.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Praise you, O Lord, for giving your Son to die for everyone!

Paul August 12

Through Faith

Paul wrote the book of Romans as a letter to the Romans when he planned to visit them, but it was quite some time before he actually got there.

Romans is said to be the most important and complete statement of the Good News.

Paul opens his letter with praise of the Romans, how the whole world was hearing of their faith. Paul very much wanted to visit them but something always kept coming up to prevent him from going.

Paul pointed out how they could benefit from each other’s faith – What I mean is that both of you and I will be helped at the same time, you by my faith and I by yours. Romans 1:12. That is part of the work of our faith is to help each other in our own Christian group, we can pray for one another, comfort and strengthen our own brethren. That is one reason for establishing oneself in a Christian group.

Paul was an enthusiastic preacher; we too, should be eager and enthusiastic to tell others how faith can put them right with God – For the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself: it is through faith from beginning to end. As the scripture says, “The person who is put right with God through faith will live.” Romans 1:17

What a glorious message to tell.

VERSE FOR TODAY: So then, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who live in Rome. Romans 1:15.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to kindle enthusiasm to tell others the Good News and keep the faith unto eternal life.

Romans August 13

Evildoing

Paul, after the praise went right to the matter of how angry God gets with evildoers. There is no excuse for not knowing – God punishes them, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain. Romans 1:19. And that goes for us too.

How wise people think they are worshipping idols and doing but evil but they are really foolish and because their foolishness God gives the over to their evil.

Paul denounces homosexuality and all perverted ideas – Men do shameful things to each other, and as a result they bring punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing. Romans 1:27b.

God destroyed the world once because of the evil in it. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their perverted ways, remember how the homosexuals gathered outside of Lot’s house and wanted the angels within for sex?

Our society has grown to accept homosexuality, what is in store for us? Are we going to destroy ourselves from within? The hope is for Jesus to return and save us from all that pain and strife.

VERSE FOR TODAY: They know that God’s law says that people who live in their way deserve death. Yet, not only do they continue to do the very things, but they even approve of others who do them. Romans 1:32.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, not to turn myself over to any kind of wickedness and help other not to commit evil deeds.

Romans August 14

God’s Judgment

With the second coming of Jesus comes the judgment of God.

We prepare for our judgment results by how we live now – Some people keep on doing good, and seek glory, honour, and immortal life; to them God will give eternal life. Other people are selfish and reject what is right, in order to follow what is wrong; on them God will pour out his anger and fury. Romans 2:7, 8.

We have once again the dilemma about the law, the Jews live by the law, so they will be judged by the law the law, we the Gentiles him don't have the law as our rules but as our conscience – Their conduct shows that what the law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true, since their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defends them. Romans 2:15.

Jews depend on obeying the laws and circumcision to save them, we Christians depend on faith, and the saving grace of Jesus.

The preparations we need to make for the judgment, is to seek the Lord, strive to follow his example and to live within his will, that is a pretty tall order but with God's help and forgiveness we can do it!

VERSE FOR TODAY: There will be suffering and pain for all those who do what is evil, for the Jews first and also for the Gentiles. Romans 2:9.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Let the law be my conscience, O Lord, and guide me into a positive judgment. Help me to show others how to use the law for our conscience.

Romans August 15

Righteousness?

Just the time we have our shoulders back in confidence, thinking we are doing pretty good then the verse – For all have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23.KJV. That brings the honest person back to reality of human failings. We don't have to feel guilty about feeling because – As the Scriptures say: "There is no one who is righteous, no one who is wise or who worships God. All have turned away from God; they have all gone wrong; no one does what is right, not even one.." Romans 3:10–12.

We must not use this Scripture to admit defeat and not to even try to rise above sin, because there is a way out, Paul shows us how – But by the free gift of God's grace all our put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. Romans 3:24.

How can we receive God's grace? – God offered him, so that by his death he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. Romans 3:25.

The death of God's only Son was accomplished to give us a means to forgiveness for those who have faith. What a sacrifice!

We are not to give up when we fall short of God's glory, and we will fall short, we must strive to do better, rely on our faith and ask for forgiveness.

VERSE FOR TODAY: For we conclude that a person is put right with God only through faith, and not by doing what the law commands. Does this mean that by faith we do away with the law? No, not at all; instead we uphold the law. Romans 3:28, 31.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to keep my faith in you strong and to remember your grace in good and bad times.