

Senior Pastor, Kevin Flannery

Series: *The Word of God Continues to Spread and Flourish*

Sermon Title: Paul's Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Trip to Rome –

Acts 27:1 – 28:15

Fall Term – Week 11 of 12



Ice breaker: When was the last time you experienced a Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Trip? What makes a trip very good or very bad for you? If you are traveling for Thanksgiving, what do you anticipate will be good or 'no-good'?

Read and Reflect: Read and reflect on the scriptures. Consider underlining the words that stand out to you.

¹ And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. ² And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. ³ The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. ⁴ And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. ⁵ And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷ We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. ⁸ Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. ⁹ Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ saying, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." ¹¹ But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. ¹² And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. ¹³ Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. ¹⁴ But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. ¹⁵ And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶ Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. ¹⁷ After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along. ¹⁸ Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. ¹⁹ And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. ²¹ Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. ²² Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, ²⁴ and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵ So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. ²⁶ But we must run aground on some island." ²⁷ When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. ²⁸ So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. ³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. ³³ As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." ³⁵ And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. ³⁷ (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) ³⁸ And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. ³⁹ Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. ⁴⁰ So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. ⁴¹ But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. ⁴² The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the

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centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land,⁴⁴ and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land. 28¹ After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. ² The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. ³ When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴ When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵ He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.⁷ Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. ⁸ It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. ⁹ And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. ¹⁰ They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed. ¹¹ After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. ¹² Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. ¹³ And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. ¹⁴ There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵ And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion:

1. Discuss with one another all the challenging circumstances Paul faced in this journey.
2. Human wisdom, economic interests, and majority opinion overrule the wisdom from the voice of God's servant, and the journey becomes perilous. Discuss a time when you ignored, or went against, a warning or wisdom from the scriptures, or from someone in your life?
 - What were the consequences of not listening?
 - Why do you think we ignore wise counsel at times?
 - What is the difference between human judgement and spiritual wisdom?
3. “One can be squarely in the will of God and still have the wind against you. Obedience does not guarantee a smooth journey.” -KF
 - Discuss a circumstance presently, or a time in the past, when you felt like life was pushing hard against you, even while trying to obey God?
 - Why is obedience and faithfulness important in your walk with God, even during a rough journey?
 - How have you encountered God in the past during tough times?
4. Who were Paul's travel companions along Paul's journey, and what role did they play?
 - How have travel companions encouraged you during challenging journeys in your own life?
 - Who are you currently 'traveling' with as they face a tough time? (There might be someone who is suffering or who is challenging that God is asking you to care for over the Thanksgiving holiday.)
 - How is God helping you to support them?



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5. How does this passage hold both God's sovereignty and human responsibility together?
 - Is there a situation presently where you feel the tension between trusting God and taking wise action? (This would be a good area for you to seek prayer.)
6. As you study the flow of this story how do you see Paul's influence grow?
 - Describe what Paul brings to his distraught travel companions on the boat.
 - How does Paul's leadership during the chaos challenge or encourage you?
 - How do you see Paul taking God at His Word?
 - What is God's promise to you during the challenges you are presently facing?
7. Share an example of how a spiritual practice has helped you connect to God and His people during a difficult season of life?

Closing Prayer:

God, may You through Christ, by the Spirit, give us that kind of confidence Paul had, so that whatever storms we face, the Word of God continues to spread and flourish in us and through us, until we arrive safely in Your presence.

Faith in Action:

- November 25, Guys Night Out, 6:30 PM, Meditation Garden
- Christmas at Church of the Saviour (www.coswayne.org/christmas):
 - December 6, 9:30 AM, Women's Christmas Gathering, Building A
 - December 13, 4:30 PM & 7 PM, A Song for the King Concert Series, Sanctuary
 - December 14, 4:30 PM, A Song for the King Concert Series, Sanctuary
 - December 24, Christmas Eve Services: 3 PM & 5PM Modern; 8 PM Cookies and Hot Cocoa Bar; 9 PM Traditional
 - Giving Tuesday for our Global Partners in northern India and Christmas Collection for Roxborough Home for Women beginning December 1