

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul told the Jews in Rome, “Let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen” (Acts 28:28). I praise you today as the God of the Gentiles, the God who sends salvation to the ends of the earth. Even though I was not one of your chosen people, you still loved me and sent your Son to die for me. How wonderful is love like this! Praise the Lord!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me about Paul’s long and dangerous voyage to Rome, and I was impressed by the many lessons which can be learned from this exciting account. First, Luke and Aristarchus showed their love and support for Paul by accompanying him on his journey. This teaches me that true friendship demonstrates itself by a willingness to suffer with those we love. When I support and encourage a fellow believer as they go through a trial, I minister the love of Christ to them, and I testify to a watching world of the genuineness and truth of the gospel (John 13:35). Second, Paul took the initiative and warned the centurion, the captain and the owner of the ship not to leave Fair Havens. This teaches me that I have an obligation to look out for the safety of others and the security of their possessions. If I’m aware of some threat to them and remain silent, it is sin (James 4:17). Furthermore, if this obligation exists for their physical well-being, how much more is it my responsibility to look out for their souls? Third, you didn’t send your angel to Paul until all hope of being saved was abandoned (Acts 27:20). This teaches me that you often wait until all human effort has failed and nothing remains except complete dependence on you. In those moments, when you are all I have left, you say to my heart, “Do not be afraid” (Acts 27:24). Fourth, Paul did not keep your revelation to himself. Instead, he boldly told the entire ship about your promise, and he staked his life and reputation on the truth of your word. This shows me that true faith believes what you have said and trusts your word no matter how difficult the situation. Fifth, Paul’s calm behavior in the face of imminent death testified to your faithfulness and gave his words a measure of authority. Thus when he told the centurion not to let the sailors leave, the centurion stopped them, and when Paul told everyone to eat, they obeyed. This teaches me that the best witness I have is how I act in desperate situations. When I rest quietly in your promise and refuse to give in to fear, I do more to convince others of the truth of your word than anything I might have said. Sixth, Paul patiently endured the hardship caused by others’ poor decisions, and he refused to feel sorry for himself, even when he was bitten by a viper! This teaches me to “share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:3). My aim is to please you, and you have told me to “give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thess 5:18). Finally, Paul continued to seek ministry opportunities in spite of all he had been through. He healed the father of Publius and others who came to him with their diseases. This teaches me that opportunities to share the gospel abound for those who have the eyes to see them, and even though I may feel drained and exhausted, I should never miss a chance to show love to others.

Reflection

Paul lived in Rome for two years under house arrest. During that time, he worked hard to support himself, and he “welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness” (Acts 28:30–31). Would I have shown the same diligence if I had been in Paul’s place? Am I willing to work hard in difficult circumstances for the sake of the gospel?

Request

Father, help me to imitate the example of Paul, who believed your promise when all hope was lost. I want to exhibit a calm assurance in your word that will testify to your goodness and lead others to Christ.

Thanksgiving

I rejoice in knowing that you are in control of the forces of nature! Nothing takes place without your consent, and I know that you are working all things together for my good, that I might be conformed to the image of your Son.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “I’ve Anchored in Jesus” – Lewis E. Jones.

Meditation Verse: Acts 27:34.