**Unstoppable - wk 42 – Lost at Sea**

**Acts - Jesus: The Sequel**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**The Gospel is spreading around the world even in opposition. They saw the Roman world – God saw us!**

**RECAP Acts:20-27 – (27 yrs since Jesus) Pauls’ missions**

**But in the waiting God was still working – (last week)**

**Acts 26:32 Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”**

**Acts 27:1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, (love all the names – real people - Julius was the guard in charge all the way to Rome) who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.**

**They boarded the ship and set out to sea - they switched over to a 140 ft grain ship (like this) with nearly 300 people on board**

**GPS - route and path - had to hug the shore due to weather**

**2 We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. (Luke the author is with them)**

**3 The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. 4 From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. 5 When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion (Julius) found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. 7 We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. 8 We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. (Unpredictable weather and winds)**

**9 Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. (Mid-October - dangerous ship season) So Paul warned them, 10 “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.” (Paul knows the danger - 2 Co 11:25 - I've been shipwrecked 3X already) 11 But the centurion, (Julius) instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, (a 3 month wait) the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.**

**Not willing or able to wait thru winter they pressed on... hoping to make it further - Plays out like a movie - Luke, was there!**

**DRIFTING**

**27:13 When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14 Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. 15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. (Drifting and blown around)**

**16 As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, 17 so the men hoisted it aboard. (Lost control of the ship) Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis (Africa), they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. (hopefully to slow them down) 18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. (Total desperation) 19 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 (absolutely no sense of direction - completely lost) and the storm continued raging, (Days and days of a violent storm - running out of food, no supplies, no end in sight) we finally gave up all hope of being saved.**

**Luke too - "we" gave up hope... You're in a bad spot - we've lost all sense of direction - have no idea where you are - giving up all hope - are you there? You're marriage, finances, health**

**21 After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: “Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. (I told you so - last time you didn't listen, this time listen) 22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. (that's comforting – compare to a plane crash or bus) 23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. 26 Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.” (Guys we're all going to live - be we are all going crash hard!)**

**Drifting off course - all they could do was - drop anchor and let the wind carry them.**

**27:27 On the fourteenth night (2 wks later out and lost at sea – they get a word from God and wait) we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28 They took soundings (what is a sounding) and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. 29 Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. (We are going to crash - God help us all)**

**30 In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. (they were sneaking off and hope to make land) 31 Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” (You won’t make it – trust God! Your own efforts will get you killed) 32 So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away. (whoa – faith!)**

**Cut the ropes – no turning back! What are your lifeboats?**

**33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food - you haven’t eaten anything. 34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” 35 After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36 They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38 When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. (They tossed the rest of it - They got rid of the last bit of valuables and dependencies – all they had was the LORD)**

* **Sometimes the best place to find encouragement and courage is in your storm.**

**Can you imagine that night – that moment. Unknown.**

**At that moment – “God we are totally in your hands now”**

**SHIPWREAK**

**39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. 40 Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. (Raise the sail and hope the wind pushes us fast enough to be thrown into the land - this was a give all or die moment) 41 But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow (the front) stuck fast and would not move, and the stern (bottom rear) was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. (such detail - so dramatic - storm raging - ship smashed to pieces)**

**42 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. (Let’s kill them off - Yikes that turned fast) 43 But the centurion (Julius) wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44 The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely. (Just as Paul had said...)**

**Acts 28:1 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.**

**GPS - The storm pushed them 600 miles in 2 weeks**

**Land on Malta - Julius, in charge, decides to wait till spring.**

**We pick it up next week - strange things happen at Malta!**

**I want to talk about storms - Not weather... but trials, storms of life. I'm not trying to spiritualize this real event - but we can learn a few things about our storms from it.**

**The Drift – Why we get off course!**

1. **They ignored the warning of God and ended up off course**

**So Paul warned them, 10 “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.”**

**They ignored the Word of God and the experience of someone who has been there. No - I know better. \*\* Do you really?**

**Disobeying God = Sin - Rom 6:23 – the wages of sin is death.**

**The cross covers our sin, but the consequences often still follow**

1. **They made a series of poor choices and got off course**

**Julius made the decision to keep going – putting others in jeopardy.**

**Our poor choices, mistakes, bad financial decision, relationship choices – can leave us lost at sea.**

**Sometimes it's the mistakes of others - our families - a parents - your children's - your spouse - and your left with the storm...**

1. **They listened to bad advice and ended up off course**

**11 (they), followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.**

**Diff voices speaking - experts - therapist - educators - culture - the rich and famous - the popular - are not always right.**

**Pro 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.**

1. **They followed the crowd and ended up off course**

**12 …the majority decided that we should sail on…**

**The majority is not always right! Look around…**

**Ever ended up off course because you followed the crowd?**

**Ps 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.**

**The Bible will never lead you astray - if you follow its direction.**

1. **They saw a “better” opportunity and ended up off course**

**27:13 When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along... (They were impatient)**

**A better opportunity it not always God’s opportunity – looking for better things can leave you always chasing something.**

**Next thing you know – you are way off course - lost**

**The we look up friend we left family, friend, God, behind…**

1. **Life happens and you end up off course**

**That hurricane was part of seasonal weather patterns they just got caught in it**

**It was storm season - What season are you in?**

**That tumor - that accident - disaster - that job layoff - we don't have answers to every tragic event - Life happens**

1. **God’s will can lead you off course**

**Sometimes it is the direction of God - working in your life**

**Paul had two clear words from God in three years - "Take courage, don't fear, I am with you - I will get you to Rome." (I know what I’m doing, I’m not done…)**

**The 1st was followed by two years in prison - the 2nd it was followed by 14 days of totally desperation & a violent shipwreck.**

**In the depth of the desperation, they started tossing things overboard...**

**What we can and cannot lose in the storm:**

**What we can afford to lose** in the Storm

* **We can lose the stuff - They tossed tackle / grain / supplies / stuff**

**In the storms we rediscover what's important**

**I can lose my house my car they are not worth dying for**

* **We can lose artificial lifeboats – They cut the life boats off…**

**Artificial lift boats = our best efforts, our plans that contradict God’s word, agendas, unhealthy relationships you run to when things are hard. Cut them loose – they’re false quick escape…**

* **We can lose our safety - violent wreak, pain, bruises, cuts, broken bones**

**Our comfort does not determine our value or God's limits.**

**In the storm we rediscover what's important**

**When I had Cancer - I can lose my health, but I found my myself**

What we can't afford to lose in the Storm

* **Don't lose Hope**

**Acts 27:20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.**

**Paul was living on a word from Jesus 2 yrs old - Take Courage - it's going to get tough - I am with you / Paul did no lose hope**

**After they declared they were giving up Paul stood up and said - Acts 27:23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’**

**When life hits hard and in the storms – “I know who I belong to – I know who I serve – and I know he has me (us) – JESUS.**

* **Don't lose People**

**They were about to kill the prisoners - but because of Paul, Julius spared the lives of the people - no fatalities**

**Sadly, some of the first casualties of storms in our life is often marriage and we drift away from our family.**

* **Don't lose Faith**

**Paul told them - 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. 26 Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”**

**The Bottom Line - Do I believe God or do I believe in God?**

**Sometimes we get so focused on the storm we forget our values and principles that are there to guide us**

**I'll run into people - how are you? / Going thru a tough time / w/ church? / no, just with stuff in life / so you stop coming to church? So, you're going thru a tough time and decide to cut out your lifeline. If you were really sick would you stay away from a doctor?**

**Don't toss your faith / values or principles overboard**

**Throw over the stuff - but not the substance - that shapes you**

**If you're going thru a tough time don't stop serving / giving / growing / or reaching out... don't lose track of the destination.**

**What did they do in the storm? They dropped anchors on solid ground and gathered together and thanked God.**

**\*\* They got grounded and trusted God**

**Drop the anchor on solid ground – the word of God.**

**Be thankful and trusted in God’s word (through Paul).**

**In your storm – what do you have to be thankful for?**

**Paul had: God's Presence / God's Promise / God's Purpose**

**Paul had wrote - 1 Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; (i.e. Storms) for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. (That's God will for you)**

**Use ship model - God is with you - Cut the ropes - Toss the stuff - Raise the sail - and trust the wind of God to lead you.**

**What we find out is, they were never lost at seas – they were right were God wanted them.**

**Prayer:**

**The Drifters (you see yourself getting off course)**

**The Shipwrecked (you’ve hit land and it’s bad)**

**Have volunteers as told - Jerusalem – Caesarea – Jail’s**

* **Paul – attacked, beat nearly to death in the temple**
* **Lysias (commander) – arrests Paul**
* **Ananias – Trial (1) tries to condemn Paul to death**
* **Lysias (commander) – fight break outs – Paul is back to jail**
* **Ananias – High Priest conspired to ambush and kill Paul**
* **Lysias (commander) – sends Paul to a safer venue – in Caesarea**
* **Ananias – Trial (2) in Caesarea to condemn Paul – Lysias present**
* **Felix (Gov) - in Caesarea – not guilty but lets Paul sit in jail – 2 yrs to grant a favor to Jewish leaders**
* **Festus (Gov) – Felix is gone, hears the case with Paul, Trial (3) not guilty – perhaps back to Jerusalem - Paul appeals to Rome!**
* **Agrippa & Bernice (local appointed King & sister) – hears case Trial (4) – not guilty – too bad he appealed to Rome.**