



Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 52 and begin with an opening prayer

"Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!" But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever. For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people. And I will hope in your name, for your name is good. (Ps 52:7-9)

Opening Prayer: Lord, the only safety and protection is in you - anyone relying on their own schemes and ingenuity will fail. Give me the courage and the skill to warn my friends who are living as if they didn't need you. Let me speak a word that witnesses to your unfailing love.

Acts 27:1-26

Passage Introduction: Paul Sails For Rome

Acts 27 ushers in a climactic demonstration of God's providence and sovereignty. Throughout this chapter and the next, Paul faces very arduous situations. Yet, as the narrative unfolds, readers quite clearly see that Paul is right where God wants him. Thus, Acts 27 presents a picture of God's hand providentially orchestrating human decisions and natural events to accomplish his perfect will.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Notes:

Acts 27:1-26 - **1** When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. **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. **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 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. **9** Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after

**Day of
Atonement**

The Fast (the day of atonement) mentioned in 27:9 was on October 5 in A.D. 59, the likely year of the journey. Sailing started to get dangerous in the eastern Mediterranean in mid-September, and normally stopped altogether by mid-November. Ships ought to be making for land, and reckoning on a long stay before the seas are safe again in spring.

the Day of Atonement. 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.” **11** But the centurion, 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, 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.

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. **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. 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, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. **18** We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. **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 and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. **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. **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. **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.”

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about God in this passage?

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about you, other people, humanity in general?

- Are there any commands to obey in this passage? Are there any examples to follow or avoid? What in this passage applies to your life today?

Key Takeaway:

As you read today's passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down in the margins? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

1. **Rejoice:** - What did God show me today that I can **rejoice in**?
2. **Repent:** - What did God reveal that I need to confess or **repent of**?
3. **Requests:** - What prayer **requests** do I have as a result of my time with God today?