



Harmonychurch.life

Each month we have a special memory verse and Life App. All of our stories revolve around those.

This month's Memory Verse is:

**"God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ.
Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift."
*Ephesians 2:8***

This month's life app is

**Faith
"Believing what Jesus did can change me."**

Weekly, we have a different bottom line that goes with our story.

Week 1: **"The story of Jesus is for everybody."**

Week 2: **"The story of Jesus is bigger than every other story."**

Week 3: **"The story of Jesus changes how I forgive others."**

This week's bottom line is;

"The story of Jesus changes how I see my problems."

Our story for this week is 'Paul Shipwrecked'. (Acts27:1-28:10)

**We've been talking about Paul a lot lately, because, there is a lot we can learn from him. *He was* a man who originally hated Jesus and His followers, but had seen the light—literally, a blinding light and a voice from heaven—and now was spreading the story of Jesus with anyone and everyone he met. This did not make the religious leaders happy, so Paul had been arrested and imprisoned for several years in the Roman fort at Caesarea. Though he was in jail and had been treated unfairly, he was given countless opportunities to share the story of Jesus.

Well, the governor of Caesarea eventually handed Paul over to Julius, a commander in the Imperial Guard. And a new adventure in Paul's life began.

Paul and Julius boarded a ship and headed out for Rome. The first part of their journey went smoothly, but when they were on the last leg of their journey to Italy, the winds forced them off course.

The boat finally made it to a small harbor in Crete.

Paul stared out at the stormy dark sea. He knew that winter was coming and if they kept going, the ship and everything in it would be lost and their lives would be in danger.

But Julius had a schedule to keep, so he commanded that they keep sailing.

Soon, a bitter cold gale (very strong wind) whipped up.

Even the sailors began to fear the ship couldn't take such a beating. They began throwing things overboard to make the ship lighter.

Paul stood up before all the sailors and the many passengers and delivered this message.

(Reading directly from Acts 27:22-26.)

'Now I beg you to be brave. Not one of you will die. Only the ship will be destroyed.

I belong to God and serve him. Last night his angel stood beside me.

The angel said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must go on trial in front of Caesar. God has shown his grace by sparing the lives of all those sailing with you."

Men, continue to be brave. I have faith in God. It will happen just as he told me.

But we must run the ship onto the beach of some island.'

Sure enough, at midnight on the 14th night of the storm, one of the sailors had a hunch that they were getting close to land. Paul continued to assure everyone that they would live.

He broke a piece of bread and gave thanks to God for it. Paul encouraged everyone to eat, as it had been a long time since anyone had eaten, and they would need the food for energy.

Everyone ate some food and felt a little better. Soon the grey dawn came, and they could see a sandy beach ahead. They were going towards it, but when they cut the anchors loose, wind drove the ship onto a sandbar. A sandbar is a line of sand just under the water that has been made over time by currents and waves.

The storm beat against the ship until it began to break apart.

The commander, Julius, could see he was losing control. 'Jump overboard and give yourselves to the sea! It is the only way you can save yourselves,' Julius yelled. Everyone jumped.

Some people swam toward the beach, and others clung to boards from the ship. But they all made it to shore alive.

The weary survivors soon discovered they had landed on an island called Malta. The people of the island welcomed them, building a large fire.

As Paul tossed an armload of sticks onto the fire, a poisonous snake slithered out—and snapped onto his hand!

Everyone thought Paul must have done something terrible and now was being punished for it. But Paul simply shook the snake off his hand and into the fire.

He didn't swell up, pass out, or seem affected by the snake's bite at all! So, everyone began to think that Paul was a god, which of course, wasn't true.

The island's chief official, Publius, was impressed by what he saw from Paul. He invited Paul into his home for three days— even though his father was sick.

Paul asked to see his father. Paul went into the room where Publius' father lay burning with fever and laid his hands on the man. He asked God to heal the man so that the people of Malta would see God's power & love. And God did!

When the people of the island heard about this, everyone who was sick came to see Paul to be made well.

Through God's power, every single one of them were healed. And when winter was over and it was time for Paul to leave, the people of Malta gave him and Julius all the supplies they needed for the trip to Rome.

Though Paul was still traveling toward his trial in Rome, he was grateful to see once more that God could bring something good from even the most difficult situations."

Do you wonder how Paul could stay so calm during such a terrible storm? I do! I'm pretty sure I would not have handled that scary situation so well, and I am CERTAIN I wouldn't have been so calm if a snake bit me! Especially a *poisonous* one. But Paul experienced something that you and I can too. And that's the truth that ...

“... the story of Jesus changes how I see my problems.

Paul couldn't see his way through the storm, but he trusted that God could. He knew that God hadn't abandoned him up to this point, and He wasn't going to. It's hard for you and me when we can't see how we will ever get out of a storm in our life, a bad situation—but just like Paul, we can know that God sees the big picture and controls everything, and we **can trust God no matter what.**

He will carry us through, whether our storm looks like our parents fighting, our best friend moving away, or having to start a new school. We can see our problems as an opportunity for God to show up and do AMAZING things in our life.

You know, there is a valuable lesson to learn from Paul. He was in a terrible situation—I mean really bad. The amazing thing is that God brought something good out of something bad.

Paul could've seriously complained! He was in prison? A shipwreck? If I were Paul I would be whining like CRAZY! But if he had been whining and complaining he would have missed out on the incredible things God had for him to do.

He didn't, though. Paul didn't complain. He had faith in God the whole way—and ended up surviving because of it. This story really changes the way I look at my own situations and circumstances. Let's take another look at our Bottom Line for today;

“The story of Jesus changes how I see my problems.”

Let's ask God now to help us do that.”

PRAY

Dear God, You are more powerful than we can imagine. You know more than we could ever hope to, and You love us more deeply than we could ever understand. Yet still we sometimes have trouble not being worried or anxious about our problems. Sometimes, even completely overwhelmed. Please help us remember the story of Jesus and how His story can change how we see our problems. Your plan for us is still at work in the world, and may the truth of Your power, wisdom, and love change our outlook. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.

****So, when struggles in life happen, know that God knows and God cares. He knows when you'll have problems and how they'll turn out. You can trust God no matter what. AND you can trust that somehow, sometime, in some way that you'll never see coming, something good will come from it—just like it did for Paul.**