



CROSSPOINTE

PEACHTREE CITY

A BALLAST FOR THE SOUL

– Acts 27:13-44 –

*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.
But soon a tempestuous wind, called the
northeaster, struck down from the land.*

– vv 13-14

And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. 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.

– vv 15-17

Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 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.

– vv 18-20

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. Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 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.' So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island."

– vv 21-26

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. So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. 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, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go.

– vv 27-32

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. 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." 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. Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.

– vv 33-38

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. 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. 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.

– vv 39-41

The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. But the 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, and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

– vv 42-44

Why such peril on the high seas?

“From the moment they boarded the doomed ship to the cold wild morning it broke up on the shore of Malta there was no miracle. No divine power calmed the sea, as some years previously Galilee’s tempest had subsided in recognition of her Master’s voice. No angelic powers conveyed the ship unscathed into port. All the passengers and crew were saved, but only after two weeks and more of agonized suffering and a final inglorious, hair raising scramble from the wreck through the surf to the shore.

If Paul was God's own appointed apostle and ambassador, sent to represent the gospel of God's own Son to the highest authority on earth; and if God is the God who created and controls nature, who 'rules over the surging sea, and when its waves mount up, stills them' (Ps. 89:9), then why did not God's kingly rule order the Mediterranean to give His ambassador a smoother passage, instead of torturing him for two weeks and then throwing him up like a half-drowned rat on the beach?"

– David Gooding, Queens University Belfast

*There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

– Romans 8:1

Why such peril on the high seas?



“‘Real isn’t how you are made,’ said the Skin Horse. ‘It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but really loves you, then you become Real.’ ‘Does it hurt?’ asked the Rabbit. ‘Sometimes,’ said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. ‘When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.’ ‘Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,’ he asked, ‘or bit by bit?’

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.'"

– Margery Williams Bianco, *The Velveteen Rabbit*

"To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us."

– Tim Keller

"A circle of grass, smooth as a lawn, met her eyes, with dark trees dancing all round it. And then – oh joy! For He was there: the huge Lion, shining white in the moonlight, with his huge black shadow underneath him. But for the movement of his tail he might have been a stone lion, but Lucy never thought of that. She never stopped to think whether he was a friendly lion or not. She rushed to him. She felt her heart would burst if she lost a moment.

And the next thing she knew was that she was kissing him and putting her arms as far round his neck as she could and burying her face in the beautiful rich silkiness of his mane.

'Aslan, Aslan. Dear Aslan,' sobbed Lucy. 'At last.'...Lucy buried her head in his mane to hide from his face. But there must have been magic in his mane. She could feel lion-strength going into her. Quite suddenly she sat up. 'I'm sorry, Aslan,' she said. 'I'm ready now.' 'Now you are a lioness,' said Aslan. 'And now all Narnia will be renewed.'"

– C.S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian*

*Begone, unbelief
My Saviour is near
And for my relief
Will surely appear.*

*By prayer let me wrestle
And He will perform
With Christ in the vessel
I smile at the storm.*

– John Newton



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