

MINISTRY STORMS

Model: The Apostle Paul

Focus: Euroclydon

In **Acts chapter 27**, the Apostle Paul is described as a traveler on con-ship. He is an inmate, and along with his fellow prisoners, he is in transport to Rome. It was smooth sailing when they departed Lycia, but the unexpected happened ... A storm occurred. But this was no ordinary gale; this one was different. It was a beast. Verses 14 & 15 illustrate the event ...

“But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon (your-rock-lee-don). -Think Typhoon- So when the ship was caught and could not head into the wind, we let her drive.” Acts 27:14-15 NKJV

“They lost all control of the ship. It was a cork in the storm.” Vs. 15 MSG

LOST. ALL. CONTROL.

We struggle to find equilibrium because we are being tossed like a “cork in the storm.”

- You fight the waves and manage to get your head above water, only to be pulled back down by the vicious undercurrent.
- A sense of hopelessness emerges because the storm has taken over.
- You’ve lost all control, and you are at the mercy of the storm.
- Euroclydon is not a passive rain shower; it’s a torrential downpour that can wash away years of ministerial investment.
- It is wave after relentless wave that crashes against you and your crew time and again until its unyielding strength crushes you.

Some of you have weathered Euroclydon on a personal level as well as a ministerial level.

- Things are increasingly unhinged, uncommon, and uncomfortable.
- Even when you find yourself a plank to stay afloat, you look around and quickly realize that there is more at stake than your own personal survival.
- Other shipmates are attempting to weather the same storm.
- As far as storms go, it doesn’t matter how together you might be personally because the mayhem AROUND YOU still affects you.
- It’s the stuff you did not produce on your own, but you’re forced to deal with it.
- You can’t control Euroclydon! You simply try to survive it.

Covid was my Euroclydon. I was ill-prepared for the magnitude of that storm.

- People. Lost. Their. Minds!
- Back-to-back-to-back phone calls. / Jimmy, Mike, Dave, and a bonus call, Becca.

- There was confusion. There was uncertainty. There was fear. There was death. There was anger. There was DEEP division.
- Should we remain open or close? Mask or no mask? Vaccination or no vac.
- We closed, and 12 weeks later we reopened with ¼ of the people.
- I Lost. All. Control. It was gut wrenching. It was stressful. It was awkward. It was draining. Emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

COVID introduced us to a form of spiritual paralysis, but we are walking again! We can and are rebuilding. And this time, we are building it stronger.

THE CHAOS WILL NEVER FIX ITSELF

neither can you count on others to do it for you.

Acts 27 is a lesson on the ability to stand firm when surrounded by mayhem. It is also a striking reminder that mayhem will NEVER FIX ITSELF! Left to itself, things will only worsen.

- Your personal/pastoral Euroclydon will require immediate attention in the form of leadership, spiritual directive, and renewed hope.
- The fact is, the people under your care need you!
- They need you to be strong, confident, and Spirit directed.
- **Dream on island**

Paul is our example. He shifts from prisoner to pulpiter: "Fellow passengers and crew, regardless of how things look right now, God is in control!" When things were at their worst, God spoke to Paul, and he passed it on, saying...

***"So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."* vs. 25**

A few verses later, Luke tells us...

***"After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all."* Vs. 35**

Out-of-control situations find equilibrium in the hands of a still-in-control God! It's why we can ***"cast all our cares on Him."*** Its why momentary panic can give way to ***"peace that passes ALL understanding."***

Paul should be freaking out with the rest of the freakers! Instead, he is composed, confident, and calculated. ***In verse 25, he is strong in faith. In verse 35, he is bold in praise.***

Paul kept his faith and maintained inner peace despite the crashing waves and panicked shipmates. We can do the same.

- Don't lose hope today! I know you've taken a beating!
- I understand you might be tired, overwhelmed, and frustrated.
- But rather than **GIVE up ... STEP up!** Step up in faith and lead with renewed passion.

When you have a God assignment, the enemy will taunt you. Your ministry will never amount to anything. You don't measure up. You don't have what it takes. You'll never have the resources you need. You lack the necessary leadership skills.

Paul combatted his storm by claiming a promise.

- *The God I serve promised that I will stand before Caesar.*
- *He would not have allowed this storm if it was going to keep me from my destiny.*
- With God ... **the promise is greater the problem.**
- When you have a promise deep down in your heart, everything in the world can come against you, but you know that setback is not permanent. It's only temporary.
- It's not going to keep you from becoming who God's created you to be.

So, you are now living in the light of the problem, or in the light of the promise? God never wants your circumstances to trump his Word. Not only does he not want your circumstance to trump his Word, he doesn't want your circumstance to trump his presence

The Bible says **everyone lost hope except Paul (vs27)**. So, he stepped up in a spirit of encouragement. We must become dealers of hope. We must speak to the fears of those around us and find a way to calm their spirits while the storm rages on!

Consider with me one last thought. Euroclydon was a savage opponent, but he did serve a purpose. His violent nature demanded a unified effort of the 276 people aboard the ship.

- The captain, crew, and prisoners were now on level ground.
- It would take all of them working together to land safely onshore.
- There was one unifying factor: SURVIVAL.

Gather your crew and restate your vision and mission. Ensure your leaders are on the same page as you and speaking the same language. A unified voice will inspire hope to members. Remind your crew that the **gates of hell cannot prevail against God's church**. You can rebuild stronger! You can unite your team!

ACTION STEPS:

1. Acknowledge that God is in control of even the most out-of-control situations.
2. Take Charge whenever and wherever you can.
3. Take care of yourself.
4. Lighten your load.
5. Get ready to do your part.

THINGS THAT ARE OUT OF CONTROL