

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study

“UNUSUAL KINDNESS AND REMARKABLE POWER”

For individual study or discussion

Stories of unexpected kindness move us, perhaps now more than ever. We have experienced an infamous year of bitterness and discord. Not surprisingly then, we are drawn to accounts of people sharing what they have with total strangers. We are warmed by tales of someone reaching across a great divide, whether one of culture, race, politics, or socio-economic class, and showing tender concern for someone hurting on the other side.

It is cheering, then, to read this story of hospitality on the island of Malta. But how much more strengthening and encouraging to consider how this story reveals to us how completely we may depend on our God, our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. (Ps. 46:1) God had told Paul that no one on board the ship would be lost, and now we see everyone safely on shore. God had told Paul that he must go to Rome, and here he is, walking on the Appian Way into the imperial city.

- 1) Paul, perhaps more than most, witnessed and experienced God’s power and provision while at the same time being made all too aware that the Gospel is not, and has never been, a promise of worldly prosperity.
 - Take a moment to consider the many ways that God’s power is displayed in this passage, and consider as well all of the kindnesses Paul is shown.
 - ◇ How was Paul protected, and how was he not protected? What kind of protection could he be certain that God would provide? What protection does God give us?
 - ◇ What might we learn of the purposes of God’s power by thinking through this passage? Why, for example, do you think God healed the father of Publius? (To consider more fully the power of God, see 1 Chron. 29:11-13, Ps. 136, and Eph. 1:18-23.)
- 2) If we were to assign the labels of “good” and “bad” to the experiences recounted in Acts 27 and 28, we would probably put the storm, the shipwreck, and the snake in the category of “very bad.” (For those of us deathly afraid of snakes, the piece of wood turning out to be a viper seems like the last straw.) In the “good” column, we would note the warming fire, the hospitality of Publius, and the fellowship and encouragement given to Paul by his Roman brothers in Christ.
 - Is it wrong to categorize life in this way? Why or why not? What may we miss if we only view life in terms of good and bad circumstances?
 - John Newton’s hymn, [“I Asked the Lord That I Might Grow,”](#) ends with the reminder that trials and inward struggles break our “schemes of earthly joy” so that we may find our “all” in God. What comforts and joys does God abundantly supply?



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DATE: March 14, 2021

SPEAKER: Brian/Aaron

SERIES: Acts

PASSAGE: Acts 28:1-16

Family Dinner Table

The first verse of Psalm 16 says, “Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.” Several verses in Psalm 91 echo the belief that God provides protection and shelter for his people.

“I will say of the LORD,
‘He is my refuge and my
fortress, my God, in whom I
trust.’” (v. 2)

“He will cover you with
his feathers, and under his
wings you will find refuge; his
faithfulness will be your shield
and rampart.” (v. 4)

A “rampart,” in case you are wondering, is a protective wall. If you want to see a picture of one, click [here](#).

Paul and his companions found welcome refuge on the island of Malta. A fire was built so they could warm themselves, and Publius welcomed them into his home and “entertained them hospitably.” (Acts 28, vv. 2 and 7)

When we talk about God being our refuge, do we mean that we believe that he will provide warmth and shelter, food and clothing? In what ways is our faithful God a mighty fortress? (Do you know the [hymn](#)?)

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Lakeway Presbyterian Church in
Morristown

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Melanie and Bill, supported
missionary partners