

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=
Lesson 24
Pathway of God's Will - Acts 27, 28

AIM: to teach my pupils what they can expect as they follow the will of God.

POINT OF CONTACT: Have the pupils give you some things that they think one can expect as he does the will of God.

INTRODUCTION: Between Acts 23:11 (when God promised Paul that he would witness in Rome) and Acts 28:16 (when Paul actually came to Rome), there was a period of three or four years with many unusual and precarious circumstances. These were all used to bring about the will of God for Paul's life. Let us notice these things on the pathway of God's will.

- I. TIME. It often takes quite a while for the fulfillment of the will of God. In other words, we may have to be patient while we are reaching the desired end.
- II. PRICE. In this particular case, there is a possibility that this extra time was caused by Paul being out of the will of God in going to Jerusalem. Perhaps Paul should have gone on to Rome before returning to Jerusalem. He was not far from there on his second missionary journey. When a person leaves the will of God, it often takes testing for him to get back. This may or may not have been the case in the life of Paul.
- III. FRIENDS. Notice the word "we" in Acts 27:1. Luke obviously was with Paul on this trip, for he speaks in the first person plural. As we find and do the will of God, God gives us friends to help us along the way. Life's best friends are found in the pathway of doing the will of God.
- IV. STORMS. (Acts 27:14-20) We may expect storms along the way as we do God's will. These are to test us, prepare us, and keep us dependent upon God. Looking back on them, it will be easy to see how they have been for our good. Looking toward them and enduring them, we must have faith that we will see later that they were for our good. (Teach your pupils to expect the storms and prepare for the storms so that they will not crumble under them.)
- V. GOD'S LEADERSHIP. (Acts 27:21-25) You will recall the Lord had told Paul in Acts 23:11 that he would testify in Rome. Now He assures him of safety in the storm. It is so interesting that it usually takes the storm to bring an angel. Often it takes a storm for us to realize the presence of God. It was in a time of loneliness that Jacob saw the ladder. It was in the fiery furnace that the three Hebrew children saw the Son of God. It was while being stoned that Stephen saw Jesus at the right hand of the Father. It was on the desert that Moses saw the burning bush. In the will of God, you can always see God in the storm.
- VI. BLESSING. Only in the will of God can we have a blessing. See Acts 27:24, 31, and compare this with the story of Jonah. Jonah was as much a Christian as Paul. There was only one difference—Paul was in the will of God; Jonah was not. Because of this, Jonah's presence troubled the ship; however, Paul's presence protected those on the ship.
- VII. SATANIC ATTACKS. (Acts 28:1-4) You can always expect Satan to attack you when you are in the will of God. It is easy for us to wonder why the wicked have it so good, but God's servants face opposition. Satan saves his hardest attacks for God's choicest servants. Let us consider it a joy to be the objects of his attacks.
- VIII. MIRACLES. (Acts 28:5, 6) In the will of God, we will find times when we are in need of a miracle. Though God is not careless as He passes out miracles, He nevertheless has them available when all else has failed. (Tell about the miracle which happened in Melita.)

- IX. PROVISIONS. (Acts 28:7-10) Yes, God provided for Paul, and He will provide for us. Matthew 6:33 is still in the Bible. God is duty-bound to provide the necessities for those who do His will. We cannot be exactly sure how He will do it; nevertheless, He will.
- X. OPPORTUNITY. (Acts 28:16-31) Though Paul was a prisoner, he nevertheless found liberty to preach the Gospel. When one is in God's will, he will find God opening doors and giving him opportunities to serve. Paul was privileged to have enough liberty while in Rome to fulfill his mission.
- XI. WISDOM. God gives wisdom to those who are in His will. This is seen by the fact that Paul had written to the Roman people before his arrival. The entire book of Romans is this letter which he wrote ahead, giving them a foretaste of the message he would preach and preparing them for his coming.
- XII. IMPRISONMENT. Paul was in prison in Rome for several years. There has been much disputing about whether he was in prison once or twice. It is generally believed that he was freed from the prison for a season; that he then visited some of the places of his earlier ministry; and that he was then placed in prison at Rome again. This is probably true. While in prison, Paul wrote some wonderful letters. It was there he met Onesimus and wrote his friend, Philemon, concerning Onesimus. His letter to the Ephesians was written while he was jailed in Rome, as were the Philippian and Colossian letters and Paul's letter to Timothy.
- XIII. JOY. Doing the will of God brings joy at the end of the road, II Timothy 4:6-8. Paul has now finished his course. What he means is, he has finished the outlined plan of the will of God. He knows now that God's plan for his life is ended, and he awaits the reward. He said earlier that he would rather die than live, but that God's will was not finished in his life. Now it is; and like the winner of a race, he is about to receive his Heavenly reward. This reward is available to all who find and do His will and finish the course!

MEMORY VERSE: "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve," Acts 27:23.