

WHEN DESTINY FACES DISASTER

Acts 27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' cohort. 2 And boarding a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail alongside Asian places, we set sail, Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, being with us.

- Let me go straight to my message. This morning, I want to talk to you on a message titled **WHEN DESTINY FACES DISASTER.**
- From the time you were conceived, your life was set on a specific course with an intended destination.
- Your birth was not your choice; neither was it your parents' decision, but rather God Himself decided to bring you about. Talking to Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), God said He knew him before he was born and before he came out of his mother's womb, and He ordained him as a prophet to the nations.
- Now, that is mind-boggling because it means that your life is ordained to achieve certain things, things that were determined without your permission.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- In other words, we are on a journey with a set destination – your destiny is your discovery and not your decision.
- Just like Jeremiah, we all have something that God has called us to do – each day that goes by, each circumstance and season that you go through is designed to bring you closer to your destiny. In other words, your life journey, your family, your struggles, your victories are tailored to equip you to fulfill your destiny.
- Where we read, it was the beginning of Paul's journey to Rome. Paul had been in Roman custody for over 2 years, having appeared before Governor Felix, then Festus, Agrippa and eventually he appealed to Caesar. The trials took place in Caesarea, after he had been moved from Jerusalem for his safety.
- Before leaving Jerusalem for Caesarea, the Lord appeared to Paul and said the following:
Acts 23:11 And the following night the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as you have testified of Me in Jerusalem, so you also must bear witness at Rome.
- It was God's plan for Paul to go and testify about Him in Rome and that plan eventually placed Paul on a voyage to Rome. When Paul appealed to appear before Caesar, it was because God had earlier communicated it to him about testifying in Rome.
- Again, it was not Paul's decision to go to Rome, but he discovered it through God's visitation.
- For Paul, the trip to Rome was not done on the spur of the moment but was pregnant with destiny.

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- Is your life governed by destiny and intentional living, or is it a case of whatever happens, happens – Comsi Comsa.
- On the ship to Rome, Paul was in the company of prisoners. Both were going to Rome, but for different reasons.
- The prisoners were motivated by the possibility of becoming free when they got to Rome, but Paul was motivated by destiny – the testimony of Jesus needed to be heard in Rome.
- In life, there are two types of people: a Paul type and a prisoner type.
- Both Paul and the prisoners were on this voyage and you can either face the voyage of a life as a prisoner or as a free man.
- Life happens to all, whether you are a child of God or just God's creation.
- Whether your life is purpose-driven or self-driven, you will still face disasters in life.
- The voyage to Rome was nothing short of a disaster; it was horrific and life-threatening.
- As we will shortly see, people of destiny respond to life differently from those who are driven by selfish ambitions.
- Disasters of life are not selective, and you would rather face them whilst being on the side of destiny.

Acts 27:4 From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us...7 We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. 8 We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. 9 Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous

- In life, we will face head winds whose intention is to stop you from becoming what God has called you to do.
- There are things that happen to us that make our lives impossible – some of you have lost your marriages, some have lost their jobs, some have lost their health.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

2 Timothy 3: 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

- The devil knew that if Paul could get to Rome, the gospel was going to go further – he was determined to stop Paul by all means. Some of the disasters you are going through are a result of your calling.
- Rome was the capital of the world at that time, and whatever was spoken there would go across the world.
- Unless you embrace your destiny, you will not know how to withstand the disasters of life.

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- Paul was carrying destiny within him, and yet he faced dangerous moments in his life.
- Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but God will deliver them from all of them (Ps 34:19).
- Yes, disasters are bound to happen because in this world you shall have trouble, but some disasters can be averted by listening to sound advice, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 27: So Paul warned them, 10 "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." 11 But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.

- The Centurion was warned by Paul, and I believe Paul was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit when he said this, but no one paid attention to him.
- Sometimes we see red flags about certain situations, and we choose to ignore them and go with our emotions and experience, only to get ourselves in trouble.
- Sometimes we are victims of other people's bad decisions – Paul knew that disaster was coming, but he was stuck on a ship; as a result, he experienced the same loss.
- During a disaster, we sometimes need to know how to make ends meet – when you are going through a financial crisis, it is important that you become prudent with the little that remains

Acts 27:18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard.

- They started offloading the ship to try to keep it afloat – may the Lord give you the insight of what adjustments are necessary as you wait for help.
- You see, when a disaster lasts for long, it is possible to lose all hope, and that was the case on this voyage.

Acts 27:20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

- The pain was real, the loss was insurmountable, and the storm was not stopping – it looked and felt like the end was imminent.
- When it has been dark for many years, depression can easily set in and you can give up on life.
- The big question is this: how do you come out of this dark place? How did this voyage end? Is it even possible to come out of that place you are in right now?
- In other words, what happens when destiny faces disaster?

Acts 27:21 After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand

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trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

- What a turn of events we have here. In the middle of despair, someone stood up and spoke life where death was.
- It was not the centurion, it was not the pilot, nor was it the owner of the ship who saved the day. It was a prisoner who was pregnant with destiny.
- With no hesitation, Paul spoke hope and life into the situation. He reminded them of their stubbornness but did not condemn them for it.
- They should have listened to him, but they didn't – you should have listened, but you didn't, you should have paid more attention, but you didn't, but God is full of grace.
- In our foolishness, we expose ourselves to danger; in His grace, He overlooks our foolishness and saves us.
- Whilst everyone was hopeless, Paul was confident about life. He was certain about getting to Rome and the storm was not going to stop him.

Acts 27: 23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'

- When you walk with God, you are a person of destiny and people of destiny are backed by heaven.
- Everyone on the ship was safe because someone who was purpose-driven was among them. Your faithfulness to what God has called you to do will save lives around you.
- In the middle of the storm, God appeared unto Paul in the night. God will always appear in your storm when you are a carrier of destiny.
- People of destiny know their God – who you know matters and determines how your disaster will end.
- People of destiny are secure in who they are in the Lord – *"the God to whom I belong and whom I serve."*
- Destiny will trump any disaster because the one who calls is faithful. He who began a good work in you will do it until the coming of Christ.
- Paul knew that no matter how dire the situation looked like, God's purposes would prevail.

2 Corinthians 4: 7 Now we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this surpassingly great power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on all sides, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed....

- Carrying God's destiny does not remove disasters from your life, but destiny will preserve your life.

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- They were going to lose everything, but their lives were going to be spared. God's destiny for your life will be fulfilled as long as you are alive.
- God gave the lives of the prisoners to Paul – God is gracious, and it is His desire for all men to be saved.
- There is a need for you to keep your courage when disaster comes on you because God will save your life, eventually.
- Your only chance of surviving the storms of life is becoming a person of destiny by saying yes to Jesus.
- If Paul, who knew God was not in the ship, had not been there, they were all going to die, but because Paul was there and, by implication, God was there, their lives were spared.
- Stop living your life anyhow; become a person of destiny by saying yes to Jesus.