

Voyage To Rome

Acts 27:1-12

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 20:24

"But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many sheets of 8 1/2"x 11" cardstock as the number of children in your class, regular paper, ribbon, string or yarn, glue or staples, stickers and markers.

Paper towels or soil, seeds, Styrofoam cups, and a pitcher of water.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Tell the One You See!

Seat your class in a circle. Have them all turn to face the person to their left. Everyone should be looking at a back. Have the first person tell the phrases of a story one at a time, then that person tells the person he is facing and so on. The story should get all the way around and back to you. This is how the gospel is spread; you tell someone then they can tell someone, and on and on!

LESSON TIME!

The Apostle Paul had just made an eloquent and powerful testimony of the gospel to Governor Festus and King Agrippa. Because of the opposition that came against Paul, he took the opportunity to appeal to Caesar, which would allow him to give his testimony of the gospel in Rome. As a Roman citizen, he had the right to appear before the Emperor himself (Acts 25:10-12).

ACTS 27:1

And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.

The Apostle Paul was an innocent victim of false arrests and accusations at the hands of the unbelieving Jews and Romans. Through it all, God told Paul that He wanted him to witness in Rome (Acts 23:11). God had a plan for Paul, and Paul knew that he must take every opportunity to share the gospel. **The best place to be a witness is where God has placed you.**

Under the escort of a centurion named Julius, other prisoners would accompany Paul. Though their crimes were unknown, they would soon hear from Paul how the gospel could change their lives. Salvation was their greatest need and Paul was at the right place, at the right time to share it with them.

Julius would, no doubt, hear the gospel also. He belonged to the Imperial Regiment, which was an honorary title given to certain troops. They were revered and Julius had the responsibility of commanding a hundred soldiers.

ACTS 27:2

So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.

Paul had the blessing and privilege of having friend Aristarchus accompany him on his journey to Rome. What a comfort it must of been for Paul to have his faithful friend, who gave up his liberty and even risked his life, that he might have the help he needed. He gave up his freedom to take advantage of the opportunity to spread the gospel on their journey and in Rome. **The best place to be a witness is where God has placed you.**

These men loved God, and lived a life that was dedicated in serving Him. Aristarchus was a man who lived as a living sacrifice unto the Lord. He was one of the men who

was dragged into the amphitheater at the beginning of the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:29; 20:4). Unshaken at the possibility of losing his life, Aristarchus seized the opportunity to assist Paul in ministry to spread the gospel. Just like Paul, he made the best of every opportunity to serve the Lord.

ACTS 27:3

And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care.

Julius found a coastal ship leaving Caesarea, so they embarked and covered the 80 miles to Sidon in one day. In Sidon, Julius permitted Paul to visit with his friends and put together the things needed for the long trip.

God is sovereign, meeting the needs of Paul and his companions. Though they were prisoners, the Roman Centurion gave them the best treatment because God was in control. It was His plan for Paul and his companions to go to Rome to spread the gospel.

Are you afraid of the unknown? How would you respond to God if He were to open up a way for you to go as a missionary to a far off country? How about something as simple as sharing the gospel with your friends?

Though we may feel unsure of ourselves, or even scared, we must know that the Lord promises to be with us (John 14:26-27). The Holy Spirit gives us the peace we need to face any circumstance with confidence because He will help us through them. Paul and his friends lived with that peace and faced every circumstance with confidence. **The best place to be a witness is where God has placed you.**

ACTS 27:4-8

When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

And when we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under the shelter of Crete off Salmone.

Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

Sometimes we face difficult events in our lives as Christians, which requires simple trust in the Lord. Even in ministry, we can find ourselves overwhelmed by impossible odds, which can only be overcome by the Lord's intervention. Paul knew the Lord had a purpose for him in Rome, but the way there was difficult. Sometimes we can be in the middle of God's plan for us, even when things are difficult in our lives. It is during these times that we need to trust in Jesus for everything.

Voyager's File

You will need 8 1/2" x 11" cardstock, regular paper, ribbon, string or yarn, glue or staples and stickers.

Many of us move around quite a lot these days. Help the children in your class to keep some of the memories of what the Lord has done in their lives with this little folder. The more durable you are able to make it, the longer it will last. You may have some college kid come to you in a few years and say, "Hey, do you remember when we made this in your class? Well, I still use it!"

Give each child an 8 1/2 " x 11" piece of cardstock and 3 – 4 sheets of regular paper. Fold the cardstock in half, lengthwise. This will be the cover of the children's journal. Fold the regular paper in half, lengthwise and glue to the inside of the cardstock. Using a hole punch, make two or three holes at the fold of the cardstock. Tie ribbon or yarn through the holes for decoration. Have the children write "My Voyages with Jesus." Allow the children to decorate the rest of the journal with stickers and markers. Tell them they can keep special memories of where they live, places they go to, friends they have and people they pray for. Start them off today with a little note saying, "The best place to witness is exactly where God has placed us!"

Paul and his companions find themselves in this very place. Helpless and uncertain of the outcome of their journey, they must simply trust in the Lord for His grace and provision. This situation was out of their hands, and they could only go along for the ride on their wind driven ship.

From Sidon to Myra, the voyage became difficult because of the westerly winds. It was difficult to sail from east to west in the Mediterranean Sea. Ships in ancient times had no compasses and navigated by the stars. Overcast weather made sailing almost impossible and very dangerous. Sailing was doubtful in September and impossible by November, and this event occurred in October, AD 59.

In Myra, Julius found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy. This was a grain ship (27:38) large enough to carry 276 passengers (verse 37). Rome depended on Egypt for much of its grain supply, and the Roman government gave special consideration to those who ran these ships.

The strong winds again hindered their progress so that many ships were required to cover the 130 miles from Myra to Cnidus. The pilot then steered south-southwest to Crete, passing Salmone and finally struggling to the south side of Crete, to a place called Fair Havens.

Here, Paul would take the opportunity to encourage those who had become Christians, strengthening the church. Though the Cretans were known for their laziness and depravity (Titus 1:12), Paul and his companions would take the opportunity to share the gospel. **The best place to be a witness is where God has placed you.** Later, Paul wrote to Titus to appoint elders for the island's churches (Titus 1:5). Even in the midst of a difficult circumstance, God was in control, because He had a plan for Paul and his friends and the Cretans were blessed.

ACTS 27:9-12

Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,

saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, and winter there.

Julius now had to decide whether to spend the winter at Fair Havens or set sail and try to reach the port of Phoenix. Fair Havens was not a comfortable place to settle down because it was open to the winter storms. Phoenix had a better harbor to give them the shelter they needed.

Paul had warned them to stay in Fair Havens. They had encountered strong winds, and it was now the beginning of the stormy season. "The Fast" refers to the Day of

Atonement, which fell in September-October, which meant that sailing would be difficult this time of year. Paul had already experienced three shipwrecks (2 Corinthians 11:25), so he was certainly speaking from experience.

Julius along with the captain and pilot of the ship, made a decision they would live to regret. Instead of seeking God's will in their decision, they trusted in their own abilities and wisdom to sail to Phoenix.

All too often, God is left out of our decision making. He knows what is best for us, so we must seek His will first, then do it.

Julius and those who trusted in themselves, would soon learn that they must seek God and put Him first. They would learn very soon, that they made the wrong decision.

Paul would be given the opportunity again to lead all those on the ship to trust God. When storms come against them, Paul would take the opportunity to encourage them with a message from God. **The best place to be a witness is where God has placed you.**

Here, There, and Everywhere

You will need paper towels or soil, seeds, Styrofoam cups, and a pitcher of water. Have you ever planted some seeds, spreading them out nicely on the soil, then when you water them the water washes them all to one spot? Sometimes it takes a lot of work to spread seed evenly so that the plants will grow evenly distributed.

God has worked in our lives to be able to use us just exactly where we are today. Some of us may have some very difficult circumstances, but God can use those even though we may not like them.

Let's plant a few little seeds and watch them grow. They can remind us that God wants to use us in His kingdom exactly where we are!

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to share the good news of Jesus wherever the Lord places us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.