



# PART 1

# PAUL IN CHAINS:

# LEADERSHIP

# IN ACTION

## Chapter Two

## TAKING THE INITIATIVE

When Paul's long journey to Rome got under way again after that brief stop in Sidon, the ship encountered what would be the bane of the whole trip: contrary winds. Luke wrote:

**Acts 27:4-5 (NASB)**

**<sup>4</sup>“From there we put out to sea [from Sidon], and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.**

**<sup>5</sup>When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.”**

## A WISE MASTER BUILDER

Here is a third vital principle of leadership: *A leader uses good judgment.*

### **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #3**

### **A LEADER USES GOOD JUDGEMENT**

Luke wrote,

**Acts 27:18-19 (NASB)**

**<sup>18</sup>“The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;**

**<sup>19</sup>and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.”**

Everything Paul had warned them about was now coming to pass. Lightening the ship involved throwing the cargo overboard. The tackle was their equipment and tools. That was not a trivial thing, and the decision to do it would not have been made if they had not been in fear of their lives. The cargo and the tackle were their livelihood. But they jettisoned everything they



could get their hands on to allow the ship to ride higher, so it wouldn't get swamped by the waves.

They had no means of navigation, and no way of knowing where they were.

They were resigned to the fact that they were going to die.

**Acts 27:20 (NASB)**

**<sup>20</sup>“Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.”**

From a human standpoint, it seemed everything that could possibly go wrong had happened. The entire journey was unraveling into a major disaster. But behind the scenes, God was clearly in control. He had His chosen leader in place, ready to take charge, and in spite of the chaos of the situation, God planned to use it for good.

## Chapter Three

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# TAKING COURAGE

When Luke described the storm as “no small storm” in [Acts 27:20](#), he was not kidding.

**Acts 27:20 (NASB)**

**<sup>20</sup>“Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.”**

Northeastern winds on the Mediterranean at that time of year are **unpredictable, terrifying,** and **deadly.** These were treacherous hurricane-force winds. They arose quickly and made it impossible to turn back to Fair Havens or to turn north toward Phoenix. Paul and his companions were at the mercy of the winds.

Thankfully, as Paul knew,

**Psalm 93:4 (NASB)**

**<sup>4</sup>“More than the sounds of many waters, *Than* the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty.”**

**Psalm 89:9 (NASB)**

**<sup>9</sup>“You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them.”**

**Psalm 107:25 (NASB)**

**<sup>25</sup>“For He spoke [commands] and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea.”**

God was still in sovereign control, even though from the sailors' vantage point, all looked hopeless.

What had started out as a forty-mile cruise along the coast turned into several days of sheer terror. Luke said both sun and stars were totally obscured **“for many days”** (v. 20). They had no way of knowing how far they had gone off course or where they were.

**Acts 27:20 (NASB)**

<sup>20</sup> **“Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.”**

The terror of both passengers and crew was steadily intensifying. You can sense the panic growing. The day after the storm began, “*they* lightened the ship” (v. 18, emphasis added)—meaning, apparently, that the crew began to dump cargo.

**Acts 27:18 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> **“The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo.”**

**Acts 27:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> **“And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next day they lightened the ship.”**

**Acts 27:18 (AMP)**

<sup>18</sup> **“As we were being dangerously tossed about by the violence of the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard.”**

Some of the cargo was kept for ballast and essential supplies, but everything that could possibly be thrown overboard was jettisoned. We know this because Luke said, **“On the third day we threw the ship’s tackle overboard with our own hands”** (v. 19, emphasis added).

**Acts 27:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> **“And on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard *with their own hands.*”**

**Acts 27:19 (AMP)**

<sup>19</sup> **“And the third day *they threw out with their own hands* the ship’s equipment (the tackle and the furniture).”**

Luke himself—and very likely Paul as well—actually got involved in throwing things overboard. The picture Luke painted is that everything not nailed down was cast into the sea in a frenzied effort to further lighten the ship. Baggage, personal effects, the tools and equipment used by the sailors—everything that added weight—was thrown overboard. Their minds said the situation was hopeless, yet in desperation they fought to survive.

At this point the apostle Paul spoke up again...

**“I TOLD YOU SO...”**

Luke wrote,



**Acts 27:21 (NASB)**

**<sup>21</sup>“When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, “Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.””**

Paul was human. He couldn’t resist saying, **“I told you so.”** Besides, he needed to remind them at this point of his earlier warning. The fact that he had been right before reinforced his credibility.

Notice that they hadn’t eaten for days. This might be the result of three factors.

**First**, in seas like that, even seasoned sailors get seasick. Most of them would not have even *wanted* to eat.

**Second**, with seawater pouring into the ship’s hold and cargo being jettisoned, it is likely that the majority of the fresh food supplies were spoiled.

**Third**, and most practically, they were so busy trying to save the ship—running the frapping cables, tossing cargo overboard, making on-the-spot repairs, and doing all they could to stay afloat—they really had no time to eat. By then, all of them were thoroughly exhausted.

**It might not have been the most receptive audience for an I-told-you-so lecture.**

But there’s much more to this than a finger-wagging scolding. Paul was speaking up not merely to chide them, but to cheer them. His point was not to deride, but to encourage. Paul quickly made his intentions clear:

**Acts 27:22 (NASB)**

**<sup>22</sup>“Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship.”**

That’s pretty strong confidence. Where did Paul get that confidence? He explained:

**Acts 27:23-24 (NASB)**

**<sup>23</sup>“For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,**

**<sup>24</sup>saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’”**

There’s an irony in the angel’s words of comfort to Paul. Paul was not to fear, because God’s purpose was to bring him to the court of Caesar. The Caesar in power at the time was Nero, an utter madman whose passionate and irrational hatred of Christians was legendary. **Spurgeon** said, **“It seems no more comfort than if the angel had said, ‘You can’t be drowned, for you are to be devoured by a lion.’”**

Humanly speaking, there was every expectation that Paul would face a cruel death at the hands of the emperor. Ultimately, that is precisely what happened. By comparison, a drowning at sea might seem a much milder passage to heaven, and a welcome end to Paul’s trials.



But Paul saw it as an opportunity to preach the gospel in Rome, in the court of Nero himself. This was what he had sought and prayed for, and even if it cost him his life, that was a price Paul was willing to pay to glorify Christ. Paul longed to know [Christ]:

**Philippians 3:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

**Philippians 1:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup>“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

He described himself as

**Philippians 1:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup>“**But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.**”

His only desire was to glorify Christ in his death and take the gospel to Rome, to the very heart of his opposition, and proclaim the truth to Nero himself. Now he had an authoritative promise that he would be given that opportunity.

**Here is a fourth characteristic of all wise leadership: *A leader speaks with authority.***

### ***LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #4***

### **A LEADER SPEAKS WITH AUTHORITY**

Paul had God’s own promise of safety. He was confident it was true. He knew God was still in control of the winds, and that if God wanted Paul to testify before Caesar, a shipwreck would be no obstacle. Moreover, if God promised the safety of every soul on the ship, Paul could rest in the confidence that God would keep His word.

Therefore Paul was able to speak with the utmost boldness and conviction. His remarkable assurance was not born of *self*-confidence; it stemmed from the certainty that God would do as He said.

**2 Timothy 2:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup>“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, **for He cannot deny Himself.**”