

**Holy Spirit**  
**Acts 28**

**Pastor Ken**

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*<sup>7</sup> There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. <sup>8</sup> His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. <sup>9</sup> When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. <sup>10</sup> They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. (Acts 28-NIV)*

Giving up control of your life to God, is one of the most critical stages of your Christian growth. Fail or stall at this stage and suffer all kinds of adverse storm-like effects.

When we are whacked by fear, discouragement and even anger, to list a just a few of our struggles, one of the causes is our **unwillingness to give up control**.

Who has not sulked because you did not get your way?

Who has not pouted because you did not get your way?

Who has not manipulated because you did not get your way?

Control is about me. Control is often selfish. James the half-brother of Jesus reminds us: *<sup>16</sup> For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (James 3:16-NIV)*

God created you to live for his purposes. And those purposes are to love God and love others.

Again, control is selfish and self-centered. One of the most popular songs of all times makes my point for me. Thank you, crooner Frank Sinatra, *"I Did It My Way."*

It does not matter if I hurt you, I did it my way.

It doesn't matter if I criticize you, I did it my way.

It does matter if I stole from you, I did it my way.

When it comes to control, we make it about us. Control is a harsh pill to swallow, it has the potential to be spiritually, emotionally, and relationally lethal.

God's people walked out of Egypt in the book of Exodus. While they walked out of bondage and into the light of freedom. It would take another 40 years before they would enter

the Promised Land. 40 years later Joshua is standing overlooking the promised land as the city of Jericho stretches out in front of them.

Why did an 11-day journey turn into 14,589-day journey? God wanted his people to learn WHO was really in control. I have identified 4 questions you can ask yourself during your bible study and prayer time this week, about how you are doing in the area of control.

Can you control your circumstances?	YES	NO
Can you control other people?	YES	NO
Can you control God?	YES	NO
Can you control your reaction to events, others, and God?	YES	NO

We pick up our story of the apostle Paul heading to Rome to present Jesus Christ to whoever will listen.

Just a footnote of Paul's success in his effort, if you go to the book of Philippians that Paul wrote while imprisoned in Rome, you get a glimpse who some of Paul's converts were during his 2 years under house arrest.

*All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to **Caesar's household**. (Philippians 4:22-NIV)*

Who travels with Paul across the Mediterranean Sea to Rome from Caesarea, Israel? Luke his physician, and Aristarchus his attendant, Acts 27:1-2 tells us this. At some point in the voyage Paul and the ship are caught in a Typhoon storm. Before they leave shore, while enroute Paul tells the ship's captain the upcoming voyage is going to be a disaster. Mark my words captain Paul announces, "you will have no control over the voyage route, no control over the weather and no control over the ship's safety or damage."

Again, in Acts 27, we read some verses that makes it blindingly clear that the Egyptian ship bound for Rome, with 276 passengers and grain will have no control over the outcome of this voyage. A voyage that would end in a shipwreck. There we be no loss of life, but the Alexandrian ship would be a total loss.

Paul had admonished the ship's captain and crew not to sail into open sea because it was the start of storm season.

*<sup>9-10</sup> By this time we had lost a lot of time. We had passed the autumn equinox, so it would be stormy weather from now on through the winter, too dangerous for sailing. Paul warned, "I see only disaster ahead for cargo and ship — to say nothing of our lives! — if we put out to sea now."*

*12,11 But it was not the best harbor for staying the winter. Phoenix, a few miles further on, was more suitable. The centurion set Paul's warning aside and let the ship captain and the shipowner talk him into trying for the next harbor.*

*13-15 When a gentle southerly breeze came up, they weighed anchor, thinking it would be smooth sailing. But they were no sooner out to sea than a gale-force wind, the infamous nor'easter, struck. They lost all control of the ship. It was a cork in the storm. (Acts 27-MSG)*

It was not long before Paul's words became prophetically true, and the soft breeze stirred into a Typhoon. The crew had to let the ship drift because they could not control or steer the ship.

Because of the storm the crew took 4 **drastic measures**:

- (1) The sailors quickly pulled the small boat they were towing back on board before it was lost at sea. The boat was their means to get to shore as the massive boat sitting would anchor in a harbor. (vs 16)
- (2) Desperation and survival required as the storm beat against the ship to wrap chains or ropes around the hull to keep it from coming apart. (v 17)
- (3) The battering of the storm continued into the night, and so the crew started throwing over the wheat (vs 18) and the next day when all hope was gone, they threw over the ships tackle.
- (4) Finally, the sails were dropped, and the ship was tossed at the mercy of the wind and waves. No grimmer picture has ever been painted in scripture than the Acts 27 storm that drove a massive ship into uncharted waters. **Now, are you convinced of this truth?**

**Storms can drive you into uncharted waters that are life threatening.**

To compound the fear that was overtaking the crew was the eeriness, spookiness, frightening, scariness, and hair-raising nature of the night where neither stars nor sun appeared for **many days**. Look at Acts 27:20,

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

A person will seldom survive a storm or shipwreck if they have lost all hope. Hope is powerful to keep us going.

Hope is one of the most critical emotions in life. It truly is. Hope is like oxygen. When you have it, you thrive. When you don't, you die.

You don't just die; you can literally die.

You can survive all storms and shipwrecks if you are infused with HOPE. Hope is powerful to keep us going. There are a lot of people in our world who lack hope.

People on the brink of bankruptcy.

People stuck in deep depression.

Spouses struggling with rejection from a divorce.

Some in despair wondering if they should take their life.

Some fighting a diagnosis of cancer.

Others living with chronic pain or a spouse disappearing into Alzheimer's.

People who can't heal from abuse.

The death of a child.

The end of relationship.

The loneliness of isolation.

Some who suffered in silence.

People who have grief or shame.

You can't always spot someone who is hopeless. Who is in despair? Who is disoriented? Confused? Uncertain? Paralyzed? Fearful?

Many can mask it, many can fake it, many trudge along, barely getting out of bed, barely keeping a job, barely able to stay in touch with loved ones, barely able to hold onto faith.

*<sup>20</sup> When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. (Acts 27-NIV)*

Our age is an age of an epidemic of hopelessness. (1) Nearly half of US teens report being sad and hopeless. (2) CDC data says that 44% of teens in US feel persistently sad and hopeless. (3) American happiness is at an all-time low, life and policy issues, just 38% feel satisfied. (4) The loneliness epidemic is 1 in 4 adults in world have reported to feel lonely. Perhaps you can relate.

You are not here by mistake. God wants to give you some hope.

All of us will face storms and shipwrecks. Small storms or large storms. Shipwrecks where we get bruised and wet, other times we lose life and limb. Can I give you some advice, coaching, and encouragement-

**Treat yourself like you are someone you should take care of.**

Because you are in uncharted waters, soon or later you will hit a sandbar. The ship is on the way into the sandy shore. And this sandbar is so shallow that the bow of the ship just gets stuck on the sandbar.

Then the waves start to pound the ship. The waves are so huge that they begin to pound the ship and dismantled it plank by plank.

Total destruction is happening below their feet.

**All of God's plans are wise, only the foolish attempt to dodge them or discredit them.**

The ship starts to make all types of noises, being torn apart like noises. The ships inhabitants begin to yell and scream. The crew is looking directly at the captain and listening for his emergency lifesaving instructions.

As the waves are pounding the stern of the ship, so the ship is breaking apart like match sticks. Every time a wave slams against the ship, more planks are loosened and torn from the ship.

The boat begins to take on water. The ship is being torn apart as planks scatter in the Mediterranean.

*<sup>41</sup> But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. (Acts 27-NIV)*

Rome's ship is beached and breaking apart, the 276 passengers are just a few hundred yards from the shore.

And yet as they stand on the ship they begin to panic. The soldiers are planning to kill the prisoners, so none swim away.

The centurion would not let them carry out their plan with Paul. Everyone is panicking and shook up as we all would be. Then this Roman centurion, whose responsibility is to get Paul to Rome, he shouts so everyone can hear. **He says everyone, jump over the side of the ship now. Really. That is the best plan you have?** Jump over the side. Look at the text and see what he says:

*43 But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44a The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. (Acts 27-NIV)*

If you can swim, swim and if you can't swim, grab onto a piece of the ship and head to shore, kicking for everything your worth.

**God wants to know if you have the faith for your own survival – so jump!**

Do whatever you have to do, from here to the shore, it is every man for himself. There is no help for you. You are on your own. If you can't swim, find some assistance from a plank. It is now on you! In this way everyone reached land safely. (Acts 27-NIV)

It was a miracle of survival. The ship was lost, but the lives were saved. Some swam, and others clung to anything that would float, planks or people. Wooden crates or wooden ships galley tables. All made it to dry ground just as the Lord had promised Paul.

*44 The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely. (Acts 27:44-NIV)*

Can I summarize some lasting lessons in the form of spiritual **planks** to float on?

(1) Storms are sure to come unless you are riding a wave of grace and mercy when you disobey God. Jonah is truth teller here.

(2) Storms expose you to a life-threatening experience, but you can live in a kind of supernatural peace knowing that God has this.

God has this because he has given you his promises to **buoy** you up in a storm. Remember the promise that God gave Paul, no life will be lost. God wants to give you his supernatural peace, and this gift of peace is free. And this peace comes in a liquid form or tablet form. Don't stop taking your daily dosages of God's peace. Which drug store offers that prescription Pastor Ken? The word of God-store.

*7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7-NIV)*

**Peace is a choice.** Statistics tell us that people in the United States consume 15 tons of aspirin every day. Sales of tranquilizers are at an all-time high. And people are desperate to find resources helping them gain peace of mind. Nearly, 3000 years ago a sage named Solomon had a word for us about the benefits of peace:

*A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. (Proverbs 14:30-NIV).*

**Here are couple truths to anchor to:**

(1) The Holy Spirit will teach you how to have peace. <sup>25</sup> *“All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14-NIV)*

(2) Jesus’ peace is a free gift. <sup>27</sup> *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. (John 14-NIV)*

Notice that it says, Jesus’ peace is free. We can’t work for it, and you can’t earn it. We don’t psych ourselves up to live in a state of peace. It is not secured through Yoga, the force or TM. **It’s a gift that we simply need to accept.**

(3) God’s peace is nothing like the world’s peace. <sup>27</sup> *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

The peace that God gives is so different than the worlds. God’s peace is not based on Peace Summits, Smoking the Peace Pipe. Someone has figured out that in the last 3,500 years the world has had only 286 years of peace. Now, that is fragile peace. The world’s peace is temporary.

God’s peace allows you to be at ease, at rest and tranquil in the midst of trouble.

**Our peace** has nothing to do with our circumstances but has everything to do with knowing where we are going.

**Our peace** has nothing to do with daily challenges, and everything to do with knowing that our lives are in God’s hands.

**Our peace** has nothing to do with our quality of life but has everything to do with knowing that God will supply our every need.

**The emotion of peace leads to a peace that passes understanding.**

Malta lies south of Sicily by 50 miles. For 3 months Paul and the other passengers, including Luke the author of Acts finds themselves experiencing some amazing **acts of God’s grace. Please note:**

**To God, being on Malta was just as important as being in Rome.**

In the cold of winter, wearing wet clothing can lead to hypothermia. Immediately the islanders of Malta showed amazing hospitality of grace to Paul and his shipmates by taking care of their immediate needs. Paul and his shipmates could contribute nothing to the occasion.

**Grace means we bring nothing and take away everything.**

They had a busted-up ship. Cargo of wheat was gone. Anchors were on the bottom of the Mediterranean. All 276 on the ship were standing, starving and cold. All to some degree were confused and dazed by the trauma of the survival swim.

*<sup>1</sup> Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. <sup>2</sup> The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. (Acts 28-NIV)*

A fire was started to warm the bodies of the shipwrecked passengers. Island hospitality was over the top. As Paul got close to the fire to dry themselves off a snake came out of the fire and bit Paul on the hand. The poisonous snake would not let go.

*<sup>3</sup> Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. <sup>4</sup> When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." (Acts 28-NIV)*

Ancient superstition caused the Islanders to see this as some type of judgment against Paul. The dominant interpretation of the day of why bad events happened to people was simply, "punishment of evil or sin." Paul quickly shook off the notorious **horned viper snake** and the Islanders watched and waited expecting Paul to be dead shortly.

**The symptoms of a bite by this horned viper snake coincide with those reported in the Acts;** immediate 'swelling' due to hemorrhagic edema, 'falling down' due to faintness/dizziness, followed by circulatory shock, pulmonary congestion, and internal bleeding, all of which would lead to death if not treated properly.

After a few hours, Paul was still alert, unfazed by the snake bite and more than anything, fully engaged in conversation and island activity.

*<sup>5</sup> But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. (Acts 28-NIV)*

This not only shook up the Island inhabitants but caused them to change their opinion of Paul. Suddenly, he is seen as someone with supernatural powers. A special being. Even a god.

*<sup>6</sup> The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. (Acts 28-NIV)*

In a short time on the Island of Malta, the Islanders have gone from hosts of Island hospitality to worshippers of the Apostle Paul. In a world steeped in religious thinking and practice, word spread on the Island that a **one of the prisoners** of the shipwreck possessed supernatural powers.

The story of Paul's survival of the snake bite was told to the Islands chief leader. **Publius had to check this out, so he** invited Paul to stay personally at his Island home for three days.

*<sup>7</sup> There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. (Acts 28-NIV)*

Remember the "us," is Luke. After uncharted waters and shipwrecks, it is imperative that you **reset, rebuild** your physical and emotional strength. Paul stayed on the Island of Malta; God clearly used these 3 months to **realignment** his focus and future for the next big assignment in Rome.

### **The defense and preaching of Jesus Christ.**

You were never intended to move through life, without pause, breaks, times to **regather** your life that was shaken up by uncharted waters and shipwrecks. If that is you. Stop.

**Recenter. Rest. Recover. Recalibrate. Rehabilitate.** Some of you are in a bad emotional and physical state and the solution is rest. Recovery. Recalibrate. Do it. Take care of yourself. There is just one of you coming through this world. Don't wreck yourself by neglecting YOU!

Remember the point I made earlier: Treat yourself like you are someone you should take care of.

Paul experiences two types of healing. Recovery from the uncharted waters-shipwreck and healing from the snake bite.

Now, remember this, one is **instantaneous** and the other is a **process over time** to heal. Keep this in mind. We will circle back to it in a moment.

On one occasion, as Paul is getting to know his host, he discovers that Publius has a sick dad who has a fever and dysentery. Paul enters the father's room to see him and then places his hands on him and he is healed. I will let the text speak for itself.

*<sup>8</sup> His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and **healed him**. (Acts 28-NIV)*

Look at the word, "healed him." This word in Greek, **IASATO**, means, **instantly**. So, verse 8, has a supernatural and immediate healing. This happened through Paul laying hands on Publius father, who had fever and dysentery.

Paul, full of the healing power of God, laid hands on Publius father, prayed and the disease left at once. Who is authenticating these miraculous events? A doctor. I would suggest, as we will see that the crowds swell and a steady stream arrive at Paul quarters for healing. Luke and Paul both engage in the healing ministry of Jesus.

The healing either happens by the laying on of hands in James 5:14 , the gift of healing ( 1 Corinthians 12:9 ), or the tender interest of Jesus when he took hold of the hand of Peter's mother-in-law ( Mark 1:31 ).

### **How many need a “healed at once type of healing?”**

Jesus did this often. And still today, many are healed through the laying on of hands. The word spread over the entire island and before long Paul and Luke were engaged in the healing ministry of Jesus. It was **island wide**. And all the sick were brought to Paul and healed them.

<sup>9</sup> *When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and **were cured**.* (Acts 28-NIV)

More accurately, *the others who had infirmities*. The Greek gives the article and states the fact that there was something like a rush, continuing for some length of time, came to Paul and Luke for healing.

The remaining time for Luke and Paul on the Island was spent doing ministry. Although, it is not identified, they likely did some gospel preaching. Now, look at the word, “*were cured*.” Verse 9 suggests a healing over time. Perhaps with medicine. Selection of some herbs. Change of lifestyle. A cure over time is clearly meant by the word. The word is “**therapuo**.”

With a wholistic ministry of Jesus, healing was curative, preventative, instantaneous and over time. The full healing ministry of Jesus Christ was unleashed on the Island of Malta. That Island would be transformed forever because Mediterranean uncharted waters coughed up a ship of prisoners and mariners during the winter onto the beach at Malta.

In the winter of your life, God is about to deliver to the shore of your soul, the supernatural relief of healing, restoration, rest, realignment to your troubled and uncertain life.

The bible spells it out clearly. Nobody can refute, on an island in the Mediterranean during a 3-month period designed to reset and restart Paul’s life, God used him and Luke in a season of supernatural healing.

The use of **both Greek words** suggests that both medicine and some type of medical process was used to heal, as well as the divine power of God were at work.

### **God uses two Greek words for healing: IASATO and THERAPEUO.**

*Acts 28:8b (NIV) Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. (IASATO)*

*Acts 28:9b (NIV) ... the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. (THERAPEUO)*

This biblical account can be reduplicated today. God wants to do it again. How many are present today that would classify themselves as sick? What if one person was healed? Would you, like the island's inhabitants being willing to ask God for your own healing?

Now, keep these 2 questions in mind. For the balance of Paul's time in Malta, God's favor, prosperity, and blessing was unleashed through island hospitality.

*<sup>10</sup> They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. (Acts 28-NIV)*

Are you convinced yet of this truth? Then Paul sails to Rome and stays for 2 years in rented quarters and shares faith, tells Jews about Jesus arrival, publishes NT books, and disciples believers.

*<sup>28</sup> "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" <sup>30</sup> For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. <sup>31</sup> He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ — with all boldness and without hindrance! (Acts 28-NIV)*

How many present here today would classify yourselves as sick?

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5-NIV)*