

## Acts 28:3

***But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.***

We need to back up a little before we get into today's devotional verse, starting back in chapter 27 of Acts.

† ***Acts 27:14-15 But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive.***

You see, Paul was headed for Rome in a ship. No this was not a cruise or a vacation, but rather Paul was arrested for preaching the Gospel as you can read about in the book of Acts. So on their way to Rome with a ship full of prisoners, they ran into a storm, and not just a little rain and thunder and lightening but it was so bad that:

† ***Acts 27:20 Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.***

Now that does not sound like fun to me. Can you imagine the storm and clouds being so thick and dark that they couldn't even see the light of day and the ship being tossed around in the sea like a glass bottle with no control other than what the sea wanted to do with it.

Yeah it was bad, but it got worse:

† ***Acts 27:33 & 41-44 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.***

14 days with no food in the worst storm you could imagine with the end results being that the storm tore the ship apart, literally. ***Those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship.***

Which lead us up to today's devotional verse:

† **Acts 28:3** *But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.*

Reading this, you can tell that they made it to shore safely (Read verses 1-2), and people read this and even teach on how awesome it was that Paul was bitten by a snake and didn't die or even have his hand swell up, which I admit is cool.

But when I read this the other day, I saw something else that I think we can all learn from. Paul was persecuted and thrown in prison for sharing the Gospel. He was in a tremendous storm and went at least two weeks with no food while in the middle of the storm, and had to swim to shore to save his life because the ship that he was on was destroyed by the storm. Yet, despite all that, we read that Paul was still a servant

What, you didn't see it? *Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire.*

There were 276 people on this ship (see Acts 27:37) and out of those 276 people, who was out gathering sticks so that others could be warmed? Paul

Paul could have bragged and said, "Hey if it wasn't for me, you would all be dead right now." Which was true because an angel told Paul what to do to save not only himself, but everyone on board the ship, all 276 of them. And he could have told others to gather sticks and start a fire and do this and that. But Paul didn't, because he had a perfect example of what a servant is, and that perfect example was Jesus.

We have that same example, yet we make excuses for not being a servant and even not going to church or praying or reading our bible daily. Don't wait for a storm or something bad to happen before you become a servant. Do it now and be an example to others, just like Jesus was an example for all of us, and Jesus is far more greater than any of us.

† **John 13:15-17** *For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*