

INTRO //

Welcome to Faith Students! We are so glad that you have joined us tonight! This is our last night in the Book of Acts. We went through the whole book in 3 months! Acts is in the new testament. It's all about how the Holy Spirit equipped normal people just like you and me to start the "Christian church" and change the world!

SCRIPTURE PREFACE //

Paul was Saul. Killing Christians. Jesus reveals himself to him. Saul surrenders to Christ. Changes his name to Paul. Becomes one of the founding pastors and missionaries in the Christian church. One day Paul is arrested and is taken to stand trial before Caesar. Paul warns the soldiers and sailors that a storm is coming and a shipwreck is imminent, but they do not listen. Suddenly the ship carrying him to trial is hit by a storm and everyone on board is panicking.

WHAT TO DO WHEN PAIN IS STANDING IN THE WAY OF YOUR PURPOSE:

"Pain is a partner along the path that leads to your purpose."

Acts 27:21-26,30-32

Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss. 22 **But take courage!** None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. 23 For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, 24 and he said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.' 25 So **take courage!** For I believe God. It will be just as he said. 26 But we will be shipwrecked on an island."

30 Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the front of the ship. 31 But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, **"You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard."** 32 So the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

1. TAKE COURAGE / STAY ON THE SHIP!

ILLUSTRATION IDEAS//

- Story of a time you were so scared you ran out of the room.
- Share your biggest and most embarrassing fears.

APPLICATION //

“A LIFE FULLY DEVOTED TO JESUS RARELY LEADS US AWAY FROM THE STORM, BUT OFTEN DIRECTLY INTO IT.”

If you want to become a Christian to make your life easier... you are sadly mistaken. Jesus said “Pick up your cross and follow me.” He says, “You will be hated for loving me.” Jesus promises suffering and hardships for the believer.

Storms and challenges are not a reason to jump overboard. They are a reason to stay put and stand strong.

It is human nature to respond to adversity in 2 main ways:

- 1) FIGHT - I'm gonna dig my heels in and face this thing.
- 2) FLIGHT - I'm outta here. Avoid the issue.

Many “christians” will eventually jump ship and abandon the faith entirely because they do not understand that we are not protected from storms but in fact promised storms. They think the presence of a storm = the absence of the Savior. But this is not true. For the believer storms are yes difficult but beneficial. Scripture says to rejoice when we face trials because God is using them to produce something great within and through us. Jesus also promises the believer that in the midst of great sadness and despair that He will “never leave us or forsake us”. God does not cause all storms but He can use them for His glory and our benefit.

God told Paul he would arrive in Rome. God also told Paul a storm was coming. Paul did not fear the storm because he could hold onto the promise of God that he would make it to Rome. And the arrival of the storm didn't confirm the absence of a God but confirmed the Word that God gave Paul promising the storm.

We need to get into the Word of God so we know the truth. Many young people jump ship on Jesus because they don't actually know Him, who He is, what He has said and what He has promised. And they've been serving an incorrect version of Jesus. Which leads to disappointment.

Paul knew this Jesus and heard His voice. That is why in the middle of prison and a possible shipwreck he could speak to the soldiers and sailors with such confidence.

“He went from being a captive on the ship to captain of the ship.”

CHALLENGE // What storms in your life have cause you to almost jump ship on God?

- Do you know what God says about those things?

Acts 28:1-6

“Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. 2 The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us. 3 As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. 4 The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, “A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, *justice* will not permit him to live.” 5 ***But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed.*** 6 The people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw that he wasn’t harmed, they changed their minds and decided he was a god...”

2. SHAKE IT OFF!

ILLUSTRATION IDEA //

- **Story of a time you were bitten by an animal (funny or serious)**

APPLICATION // We have all been bitten by something...

- Maybe for you it was abuse. Somebody took advantage of their power over you, and took your innocence from you. Leaving you feeling broken, guilty and like you are dying inside.
- Maybe for you I was divorce. Life seemed normal. Things were going well. And then mom and dad pulled you into the kitchen, sat you down and the table and they explained to you that dad was moving out. They said it wasn’t your fault... but it sure feels like it. Now you spend your weekends going back and forth between parents. Not knowing which side to take. Wondering “God how did we get here?”
- Maybe you’re like me and you were bitten by a sudden and painful loss of somebody you loved dearly. Didn’t see it coming. No time to prepare. Just you wake up one day and they are gone for forever.

Whatever it is we have all been bit by something. Something that hurts. That is very real. And could very well kill us. Tonight I want to tell you... SHAKE IT OFF.

I didn’t say ignore it. I didn’t say minimize it. I didn’t say don’t let it bother you. I didn’t say its not a big deal. I said SHAKE IT OFF.

I am sure that snake bite hurt when it sunk its fangs into Paul. I am sure fear crept into his heart and mind in that moment. But he didn't just lay down by the fire and die with the snake hanging onto his hand either! He walked over to the fire and shook the snake off .

For many of us we have been walking around with that "snake" hanging off our arms for too long. Paul knew that snake was not going to kill him because he had not yet completed the purpose that God set out before him.

Pain was in the way of him fulfilling the purpose that God had for him. Don't allow your current pain to be a reason why you stop pursuing your God given purpose!

Scripture says "Our God is an all consuming fire." Paul shook the snake into a literal fire. Tonight you have the opportunity to finally deal with that snake hanging off your arm. God is here tonight and is more powerful than your pain. He desires to meet you and deal with what you've been dealing with.

God doesn't use storms or snake bites to break his people. He uses them to make his people.

"What the enemy meant for evil God turned for good."

CLOSING //

- Invite all students to the altars for a time of worship.
- Encourage students who are dealing with fear and doubts in their storms to worship in the midst of it all. As a way to say "I won't jump ship!"
- Have students who are ready to give their undealt with pain to the Lord partner with a leader in prayer during worship. Name what it is & surrender it to Jesus.