

Audio Transcript of Sermon
February 27, 2021
Acts-Paul in Rome

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. For many weeks, we have been studying the Book of Acts and will conclude this study today. We found out that the early church was very close and very persecuted. It came to grips with the Jewish history of the early members as gentiles were called into the faith and cautiously accepted Paul who had persecuted the church as Saul. Most recently, we saw that Paul was before King Agrippa and Governor Festus defending himself against the accusations from the Jews in Jerusalem. The two leaders and prominent people who were with them concluded that Paul had done or said nothing worthy of death or imprisonment and would have been released then and there. Paul's previous appeal to Caesar, exercising his Roman rights of citizenship, rendered their decision null and void as they had gathered solely to determine on what grounds Paul would be sent to Caesar.

Eventually Paul was sent to Rome via ship along with other prisoners. Guarding Paul and the prisoners was Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band, a prestigious regiment of Roman soldiers stationed in Caesarea. Traveling with the centurion was a group of soldiers. Prisoners and soldiers boarded a ship with a home port of Adramyttium, what was a city on the western shore of what today would be Turkey. Connected to Smyrna by a road rebuilt under the leadership of governor Manius Aquillius, about eighty-five years prior to the time of Paul, it was known for its school of oratory. It was a prominent port city at the time explaining its mention in this passage. Today the Turkish city of Edremit is located in the same general area and today is known for olives and tourism.

The sailing plan was to stay close to the coastline, following the coast from the middle east to the southern shores of what today would be Turkey. Traveling with Paul was Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica. Aristarchus had previously traveled with Paul on prior trips and was one of the men who was grabbed by the mob at Ephesus and taken into the theater. Today we would think it odd that a personal acquaintance would travel with a person being transported as a prisoner, and back then it was an unusual arrangement with the allowance given because Paul had not said or done anything worthy of death or imprisonment. A

day later the ship stopped in the port city of Sidon, a Roman colony along what would today be the coast of Lebanon.

While at Sidon, in another decision that would not be considered today by prison guards, Julius allowed Paul to go see his friends who were at Sidon. We can't tell from the passage if guards accompanied Paul or if Paul was allowed to travel by himself when he visited his friends. Soon they were underway again and instead of sailing along the coast which was the original plan, sailed across the sea south of Cyprus because the winds were not favorable for sailing along the coast. Once the ship sailed to the western shore of Cyprus, it turned north, crossing the sea between Cyprus and what today would be Turkey, and in Acts, this area of the sea is called the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia. After crossing the sea, they came to the port of Myra.

Myra was within the province of Lycia and was on the southern coast of what today would be Turkey, far enough west on the southern coast that sailing south of Cyprus and then north along the west coast of Cyprus would be a very direct route between Sidon and Myra. Today, it is the small Turkish town of Demre.

From there, Julius the centurion found a ship from Alexandria, Egypt that was sailing to Italy. The winds were very calm preventing progress on the journey and eventually they found themselves sailing south of the isle of Crete, close to the city of Salmone, arriving at a city called Lasea which was located along the southern coast of Crete. Crete lies to the south and east of Athens. Acts twenty-seven verse one.

Acts 27:1-44

- 1. And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.**
- 2. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.**
- 3. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.**
- 4. And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.**

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

6. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;

8. And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

We're not given a time during the year when Paul arrived or departed in Lasea. We do know that some time was spent there and when the boat decided to depart, Paul considered the timing to be dangerous not only to property but to life itself. This contrasts with the tourist pictures of the sunny islands of Greece and the serene warmth of the French Riviera. Those touristy pictures are most often taken in the summer months when the Mediterranean is safest. Other times of year comes with peril. Heavy rainstorms are more common in winter and during spring and summer the weather can be very unpredictable. It's likely the ship was getting ready to set sail during autumn because mention is made that the harbor of Lasea was not a great place to stay the winter. Looking at the time of year, the desire to make money, and the reflection of the skill of the ship's captain, Julius the centurion believed what the ship's captain told him instead of listening to Paul's warning. Most thought traveling to Phenice in Crete would be better as its harbor faced two directions, southwest and northwest. Verse nine.

9. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10. And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

When the captain observed a soft south wind blowing, he thought it was a sign that it was safe for them to proceed. They were sailing westward close by the southern shore of Crete to travel from Lasea to Phenice and this plan worked until the weather changed. A storm, called a Euroclydon, blew in during this unpredictable time of year. Today a Euroclydon is known to be a cyclonic northeast wind. The force of the storm can mimic the strongest winter storms and feels like a hurricane, cyclone, or typhoon. Against the strong and unpredictable winds in the storm, the ship's captain didn't fight the direction the storm was taking the ship. Eventually the ship came to the island of Clauda, which today is widely thought to be the island of Gozo, part of Malta. Clauda could also have been a small island near Crete. Verse thirteen.

13. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

14. But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16. And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

The ship had come to rest in the silt near the island and the crew and passengers were concerned unless immediate action was taken, the ship would get stuck. They took the opportunity to make repairs to the ship and deployed the sail to help move it. The windstorm continued around them and to increase their chances of survival, they tossed cargo overboard to lighten the load so that the ship could ride higher in the water and be less likely to sink from rough seas. By the third day even the passengers were working with the crew to man the sails to increase their survival odds. Despite their best efforts after several days the storm still raged and the crew and passengers lost hope. Verse seventeen.

17. Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

Everyone was losing hope on the ship and feeling sorry for themselves. After giving the people time to consider their situation, Paul spoke up and reminded them that if they had listened to him while at port in Crete they would not be in this dangerous situation. Paul then told them that in the middle of this storm at night an angel of God came and spoke to him telling him that nobody aboard the ship would lose their life as Paul would need to be brought before Caesar. Paul then told them he believed this promise and also told them the angel told them they would be shipwrecked on an island. Verse twenty-one.

21. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24. Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

Two weeks after departing Crete, the ship was still in the storm caught up in rough waves of Adria, which Josephus describes as between Malta and Sicily, and if this is true, eventually the ship was driven towards the island of Malta. It is also possible that Paul was in what today is the Adriatic Sea and driven to an island known then as Melita and today known as Meleda. The crew took measurements fearing the ship was getting close to land where it could be split apart by rocks near the shore. When they measured fifteen fathoms, they cast the ship's anchors to keep the ship from breaking up on the rocks. Verse twenty-seven.

27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

The crew decided to abandon ship, deploying the life boat. Paul advised the soldiers that if the crew left the ship everyone would die. The soldiers cut the rope to the life boat letting it fall to the sea. As day broke Paul urged everyone to eat. They had gone without food for the two week period. Paul took bread and asked for God's blessing. The food lightened the mood of the people on the ship with crew and passengers totaling two hundred seventy-six. To help keep the ship afloat, they tossed wheat into the sea, to lighten the load of the ship. Verse thirty.

30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

37. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

During the day they were able to see land but did not know where they were. They did see a small creek and decided it would be best to sail the ship as far as possible into the direction of the creek. They raised the anchors and, prepared the rudder, and raised the sail to travel to shore eventually running the ship aground. The front of the ship was not moving at all but the rear of the ship was being battered by the waves. The soldiers started debating what they should do

and there was consensus to kill the prisoners, lest any of them escape. The centurion did not want harm to come to Paul and stopped the soldiers' plan before it could be implemented. He ordered all who could swim to abandon ship and swim to shore. Those who could not swim would find a piece of wood or ship debris to help them float to shore. All made it safely to land. Verse thirty-nine.

39. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

44. And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

They soon found out that they were on the island of Melita, which many attribute to Malta and some attribute to an island known today as Meleda in the Adriatic sea. The people on the island were not refined as Paul was accustomed to, yet he acknowledged they were very kind having helped them to kindle a fire in the middle of the cold and rain. The locals lacked the civilizing grace of the Roman empire. They were probably seen as a backwards and uneducated people. Paul found some sticks to add to the fire and as he was adding these to the fire, a snake came and bit Paul. Everyone saw the snake still attached to Paul's hand and the locals thought that Paul must have been a very bad person to have survived the storm only to be bitten by the snake. While we do not know what type of snake bit Paul, we do know it was so venomous that the locals were expecting Paul to die within a few minutes or at least see his body badly swollen. After time passed and no harm came to Paul the locals changed their mind about Paul. They

no longer saw him as an evil person but a god, because he survived the bite of this venomous snake with no harm to his body. Acts twenty-eight verse one.

Acts 28:1-31

- 1. And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.**
- 2. And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.**
- 3. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.**
- 4. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.**
- 5. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.**
- 6. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.**

This venomous snake is part of the reason why there is debate between what is today Malta and Meleda. Malta has no history of a snake that could cause a person to swell up, fall down and die. There is no history of such a snake on the island except for what is accepted as Malta in this passage from Acts. To explain this on Malta, tradition says that Paul caused a snake, the leopard snake, to lose its venom when he came to Malta, claiming that Paul's body absorbed all of the toxic venoms on the island when he came. Others say the snake was carried to the island on driftwood and bit Paul, yet the uneducated locals had knowledge of the snake, so this theory might not hold much weight. Another theory is that a venomous breed of snake on Malta has since gone extinct, yet there is no fossil evidence of such a snake.

On the other island in consideration, the island of Meleda in the Adriatic is home to the deadliest breed of snake in Europe, the Vipera, and the island was so overrun with the snake that the mongoose was introduced on the island about a hundred years ago to fight the snake population. Symptoms of being bit by this

snake include sudden swelling, fainting and dizziness, and probable death which are very consistent with what is recorded in the Bible.

Whether the island that Paul was shipwrecked on today is known as Malta or Meleda is not that important to the flow of the story of the Bible. Either could fit into the narrative. We do know that Publius was a prominent person on the island who lodged Paul and others for three days. Paul came to find out that the father of Publius was sick nearing death. Paul prayed for the healing of his father, laid hands on him, and he was healed. Paul did the same for others on the island as well and many diseases were healed. When it was time to leave in three months, it was a time to honor Paul and the travelers and they left with many gifts from the locals. Verse seven.

7. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10. Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

They left the island by a ship from Alexandria whose sign was Castor and Pollux, the Heavenly Twins, the sons of Zeus and Leda and sailed to Syracuse on the southeast coast of the island of Sicily. Syracuse was an important port city that connected eastern and western parts of the empire, serving as a hub of sailing traffic in the Mediterranean. Whether Paul sailed from what today is Malta or Meleda, stopping in Syracuse would have made sense. They were in the city for three days and sailed to Rhegium, located on the tip of the toe of the boot of Italy, just across from the Messina Strait from Sicily. Today, Rhegium is known as Reggio Calabria and during Paul's time was an important commercial and maritime city. The next stop was Puteoli where brethren lived. By the time of this trip for Paul, the church was already established in the area. Today, Puteoli is known as Pozzuoli. It was close to a major Roman naval base and a major trading center for Alexandrian grain ships who would trade for blown glass, mosaics, wrought iron, and marble. Paul was allowed to stay with the brethren for a week,

a rare privilege given to a person held as a prisoner. Finally it was time for Paul to travel to Rome, and the brethren there got word of Paul's imminent arrival and traveled down to Appii forum to meet them. They traveled forty-three miles or nearly seventy kilometers to welcome Paul, and the journey was considered to be one-day's journey south of Rome. More brethren met them at the three taverns, slightly closer to Rome. Verse eleven.

11. And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

13. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14. Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

When they arrived in Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard. Paul was allowed to stay in a house under house arrest watched by a single soldier. Three days after arriving in Rome, Paul called for the chief of the Jews and explained why he was there. He explained he had done nothing to violate Jewish law and yet was detained and taken from Jerusalem by the Romans. Paul added that the Romans found no reason to hold Paul and yet because of the Jews, Paul needed to appeal to Caesar. The religious leaders shared they had received no communication from Jerusalem regarding Paul and desired to learn more of his teachings and what he thought of the church because many spoke against it. Verse sixteen.

16. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17. And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of

our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

They agreed to gather together again at Paul's house on a future day when Paul taught them of the Kingdom of God and taught them about Jesus Christ out of the law and prophets. Today when we think of teaching about Jesus, we typically think of the Gospel accounts. Most overlook that the Old Testament is full of Biblical Prophecies regarding the Messiah. Paul took all day to explain resulting in some believing and some not believing. Because they could not find agreement among themselves they departed when Paul started quoting a passage from Isaiah found in the sixth chapter where Isaiah explains that the ability of the children of Israel to understand the teachings of God would be dulled. Paul then explained that when the ability of the children of Israel to understand was dulled, it opened up salvation for the gentiles. What Paul taught caused the Jews to have a good theological debate. Verse twenty-three,

23. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

24. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26. Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

29. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

Paul continued to live in Rome and we know he lived for two years under house arrest and was able to welcome all who came to him. He was not restricted by the Romans in who he could see and continued to preach the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. Verse thirty.

30. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31. Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

What happens to Paul after this time is not known to us, though the timing suggests he may have come to the end of his life. There are many legends about what happened to the Apostle Paul. These legends include that he was beheaded in Rome and was a martyr for his faith and that his death was ordered by Emperor Nero after the fire of AD 64.

During his imprisonment in Rome, it is thought that Paul wrote four letters that are New Testament books. It is not thought that Paul wrote his letter to the Romans while under house arrest in Rome. The books he did write are thought to be Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These books are not books of correction instead giving hope and reminders of our Christian faith.

Philemon was a wealthy person living in Colossae when Paul was imprisoned. One of Philemon's slaves, Onesimus had escaped to Rome where he sought Paul's assistance. Paul encouraged Onesimus to return to Philemon and urged Philemon to forgive Onesimus, who under Roman law could have been killed. He urged Philemon to treat Onesimus as if he were Paul and that if anything was owed by Onesimus to Philemon, Paul would pay it. Paul also reminded Philemon of his

larger debt to Paul, laying a huge guilt trip that Philemon was smart enough to understand that all could be avoided through forgiveness. Philemon one verse seventeen

Philemon 1:17-19

17. If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

19. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

The theme of forgiveness would be found in the other prison epistles, including what he wrote to the Colossians. The church there was led by Epaphrus who was baptized by Paul and by the time of Paul's imprisonment, the brethren there were facing challenges from the non-Christian beliefs of the locals. Paul wrote the letter to encourage them to stay the course. Greek philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and Jewish legalism had taken hold in Colossae. It is with this understanding that Paul wrote that they should not allow others to judge them in regard to meat or drink, the sabbath or holy days, and the new moon, or God's calendar, which help us look forward to the Kingdom of God and without Jesus Christ, these are of little value to us. Unstated but equally true is that with Jesus Christ in our lives, the Sabbath, Holy Days, and God's calendar are of incredible great value to us. Sadly many read these verses to explain why they do not keep the Sabbath, Holy Days, or understand the calendar of God and why they instead keep Sunday and Easter and Christmas. The people judging the church at Colossae were not church members who no longer observed these but these Greek philosophers, Oriental mystics, and legalistic Jews. Keeping the Sabbath, Holy Days, and understanding God's calendar does not make anyone a legalistic Jew. For those of us who observe, we know our faith is similar to the faith of Paul who through his own testimony at many times in his life affirmed that he committed nothing against the people and the customs of the fathers. Today as we keep the Sabbath, Holy Days, and consider God's calendar, while we may be looked at as having a strange religion, Paul's letter to the Colossians tells us to not be judged by these people. Our judgement will be of Jesus and God the Father. Colossians two verse sixteen.

Colossians 2:16-19

16. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

- 17. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.**
18. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
19. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

As Paul was imprisoned many times during his life and went from persecutor to persecuted, Paul was able to keep a positive attitude and to the church at Philippi he encouraged the same. Paul found happiness when he saw faith grow and he found contentment throughout his life. While happiness may from time to time elude us in the most trying of times, we can be content knowing that we have as our intercessor before God, Jesus Christ who provides God with reasons why we should be saved, who forgives our sins. Paul knew that through Jesus Christ he could do all things. We know that because God is not a respecter of persons that through Jesus Christ who strengthens us we can do all things, too. Philippians four verse ten.

Philippians 4:10-13

- 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.**
11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.
12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.
13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Doing all things through Christ requires a solid spiritual foundation and one that we can obtain through our devotion to the faith because around us is a spiritual war that we can sense but cannot see. When we feel attacked in this life it is the result of spiritual war. When we are distracted from God the Father and Jesus Christ and lose focus on the Kingdom of God, we know there is a spiritual war being fought with Satan deploying his ruses and tricks similar to the trickery used with Eve, to deceive us. It may be a personal loss or choice between something we have in the physical world and our salvation. It can be frustration caused by

any event and this COVID-19 pandemic has pushed hard to separate us. Even though what we see is physical, we cannot ignore the spiritual warfare happening around us because if we can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens us, we can sense these spiritual battles and we can do our part to defeat our common enemy, Satan the Devil. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus what we must do. Let's read starting with Ephesians six verse ten.

Ephesians 6:10-17

10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Throughout his life Paul went from persecutor to being persecuted and when he was persecuted about his faith in Jesus Christ, he used Old Testament verses to explain his faith. Next time, we will look at these verses to understand how the early church saw Jesus in scripture. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.