



**Sunday Service**  
**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021**  
**The Sunday next before Lent**  
**Quinquagesima**

**Enduring Hope (5)**  
**Trust when all hope is gone – Paul (1)**  
**Acts 27 : 9 – 39 and 44b**

**Opening Prayer**

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed as King of all before he suffered death on the cross: give us grace to trust in you when all hope seems to have gone, and strengthen us to pray and praise you with peace in our hearts. For your glory in the Name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

**Bible reading**

<sup>9</sup> Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. So Paul warned them, <sup>10</sup> 'Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.' <sup>11</sup> But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. <sup>12</sup> Since the harbour was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbour in Crete, facing both south-west and north-west.

**The storm**

<sup>13</sup> When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. <sup>14</sup> Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the 'North-Easter', swept down from the island. <sup>15</sup> The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. <sup>16</sup> As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, <sup>17</sup> so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sand-bars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. <sup>18</sup> We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. <sup>19</sup> On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. <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.

<sup>21</sup> After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: 'Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. <sup>22</sup> But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. <sup>23</sup> Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me <sup>24</sup> and said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you."

<sup>25</sup> So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. <sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.'

**The shipwreck**

<sup>27</sup> On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. <sup>28</sup> They took soundings and found that the water was forty metres deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was thirty metres deep. <sup>29</sup> Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. <sup>30</sup> In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow.

<sup>31</sup> Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, 'Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.' <sup>32</sup> So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.

<sup>33</sup> Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. 'For the last fourteen days,' he said, 'you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food – you haven't eaten anything. <sup>34</sup> Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.' <sup>35</sup> After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. <sup>36</sup> They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.

<sup>37</sup> Altogether there were 276 of us on board. <sup>38</sup> When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

<sup>39</sup> When daylight came, they did not recognise the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could.

<sup>44</sup> In this way everyone reached land safely.

Acts 27 : 9 - 39 and 44b

**Talk : Enduring Hope (5) : Trust when all hope is gone – Paul (1)**

**A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus**

Keep us good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.

Sustain and support the anxious, be with all those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;

that we may find comfort knowing nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**Final Prayer**

Dear Lord, you know the brokenness of the world we live in: set straight our hearts and minds so that we do  
your will in hope, faith and love for your glory, in Jesus our Lord. Amen.

**Blessing**

May Christ the Son of God strengthen our faith, and lift our hearts to endure with hope until His return.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us now and for ever more. Amen.