The Book of Acts Lesson 50

Acts 28:1-10

“Shake it Off”

**Introduction:** As these men escaped the shipwreck, they had came to a small island located south of Sicily, this was the island of Malta. It seems that at first, they were not sure which island they had landed on. This was an island ruled by Rome, but inhabited by Phoenician people. At first, the people of Malta were extremely hospitable. They made a fire for these shipwrecked men to be comforted by the cold. Before long, this would prove to be a “bad day” for Paul.

Have you ever had a bad day, or feel persecuted for your beliefs, or like your faithfulness goes unnoticed? Paul certainly experienced these and more. Just look into his missionary journeys. But through the providential Power of God, we can all overcome the challenges and obstacles that come into our lives from Satan. Just like Paul did.

I. Shake off the Challenges that Satan Throws at you

A. When You’re Stranded

1. Paul was Physically Stranded

a. They had struggled for more than two weeks trying to survive the storm.

b. Then was cast in the sea when the ship was destroyed.

1) Paul was cold and wet, hungry and fatigued.

2) Paul was stuck on an island and had no place to wait out the winter.

# c. Paul was at the mercy of others.

1) When in your greatest need, you know where to go to receive mercy.

2) God’s grace is always sufficient for us no matter we are facing.

2. Paul was Politically Stranded

a. Paul was still a prisoner bound Rome even though he had survived the shipwreck.

1) He was stuck in Caesarea for more than two years.

2) Now he was stuck again.

b. Though in a tough spot, Paul still went to get firewood.

1) Paul still did his part although a prisoner.

2) Paul never stopped serving.

3. You may be in time where you feel Stranded

a. Sometimes we let trials paralyze us.

B. When You’re Wounded

1. He was bitten

a. There was nothing fake about this.

b. Nor did Paul set this up or even know it would happen.

# c. He had survived a storm and a shipwreck and now this.

1) How often the snake comes and bites us right when we have just about had enough already.

2) Our response to these bites are so important.

2. The Bite was from a Venomous Snake

a. This kind of snake was well known to the island people.

1) They had experienced and knew that people bitten before had not survived.

2) They understood the danger of the poison.

3. Sometimes you will be bitten in the Christian life.

a. Though the effect may be poisonous spiritually.

b. Though the pain and the sting may last some time.

c. Paul shows tremendous example of how to “shake it off”

C. When You’re Branded

1. Paul was Branded Unjustly

a. They called Paul a murderer when they saw the snake bite him from the fire.

b. Many Christians have been called ridiculous names.

# c. Many pastors and leaders have been unfairly labeled.

1) DL. Moody was called “Crazy Moody”

2) Billy Sunday was accused of preaching for money

3) Charles Stanley was struck in the face by a man yelling about his leadership at church meeting

4) W.A. Criswell was referred to by a former staff member as “a power hungry tyrant”

2. Paul was Branded Unknowingly

a. When Paul did not die from the snake bite, they people decided that must be a god instead of a murderer.

b. Paul had not done anything to deserve that label either.

# c. These superstitious people had to find some explanation for this occurrence.

II. How to “Shake Off” Adversity

A. Trust God’s Word

1. The Lord told Paul he would make it to Rome.

a. God has told you in His Word that He will never leave you.

b. He said that what we face it common to man.

# c. The Lord has said that He will not let you suffer above what you are able to handle.

2. Paul was not going to let a snake bite stop him from following God’s Will.

a. What are you allowing to keep you from being in the center of God’s will.

1) Not getting your way?

2) Others doing more and getting recognized?

3) Others not doing much and increasing your load?

b. Is there a bite from the snake Satan himself alarming you?

1) No matter what it appears to be it always comes from the snake

2) You might think that some other person is actually biting you, but it really just Satan.

3) You may believe that no one really loves you, cares about you, wants you or needs you.

(a) that is what Satan desires

(b) That many times *is* the bite

4) The snake always hides so as to bite when you are not expecting it.

(a) you should always expect Satan to be biting

(b) with this outlook, you won’t be surprised

(c) you can know it is Satan and not blame

B. Keep on Going

1. When Paul was bit, he shook it off and kept serving.

a. Satan strikes at our lives for a purpose.

b. He is trying to stop us from doing what God has given us to do.

# c. He wants to stop us from being what God wants us to be.

2. What good what it have done Paul to stop?

a. If the snake was going to kill him, he would have been dead in a few minutes.

1) Some Christians think they don’t have much time left and spend it in misery.

2) When things look grim, it is not time to give up!

b. When Satan gets the hint that He is not going to deter us from serving God, He moves on to an easier target.

# c. When Satan knows that He can get you to stop faithfully serving God, He stays right on you, biting.

C. Serve Others

1. Paul was too busy serving others and building a fire to stop

a. Being bitten was not important compared to the work that needed to be done.

b. Shake off whatever is hindering you from serving God with ALL of your heart.

# c. Nothing is as important as what God is trying to do in and around your life.

2. Be faithful serving others for the Lord and you will be too busy to worry about what Satan is trying to do.

D. Let the Lord Protect you

1. The people who saw this bite and did not know of Paul thought him to be an evil person.

a. Paul did not stop to answer the critics.

b. Instead Paul proved himself by his faithfulness in service.

2. You will want to defend yourself, but just let God do it.

a. He makes a better defense than you.

b. Let Him be proved in your life by your faithfulness.

E. Remember God’s Providence

1. Circumstances always give believers the opportunity to be tried and tested in the presence of unsaved observers.

a. Paul was lifted up and blessed in due time.

1) Publius housed him

2) God empowered him

3) The People honored him

b. Any circumstances out of your control are in the will of God.

2. God’s Will is always a safe place to be despite what Satan desires us to believe.

**Conclusion:** What started out as the disaster of a shipwreck became a blessing, because Paul was willing to “shake it off”

Have you been stranded, wounded, or branded?

Just “shake it off” and keep moving forward for the glory of God.