

Living an unusual life

Text: Acts 28:1-10

I want to share with you today about living an unusual life. Anyone can live life worried about the future, expecting the worst out of situations. Anyone can throw in the towel when tough times come, anyone can fall victim of adversity. Most in the world do that.

However, God has a different plan for you and me. We are not without hope and God in this world! The apostle Paul lived that plan quite well. He lived an unusual, extraordinary life for God. His life was not unusual and extraordinary because he never faced problems or challenges. No, quite the opposite: in Acts 21 he was arrested, in chapter 28 he almost dies in a 10-day ferocious storm and survives ending up on the shores of Malta on a very cold and dark day. As he tries to keep himself warm, he is bitten by a viper – one of the deadliest snakes!

However, he came out of every storm and every situation with a great story of deliverance for the glory of God.

In spite of his trials, there are four things that accompanied Paul and God wants you to know that they can accompany you as well:

1. Unusual favour

*V1-2 - Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. 2 And the natives showed us **unusual kindness**; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.*

The natives didn't throw arrows at them: they showed unusual kindness. Kindness was obviously unusual among them. They were not known for it.

God wants you to know that His favour will follow you! You can count on it.

V.10 - They also honoured us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

2. Unusual hope

“Hope” means, ‘the expectation of good’.

A dark, cold, bad day is about to get much worse: Paul was bitten by one of the most poisonous snakes that there is: the viper. Naturally speaking, in a situation like that what could one expect except death?

V.3-6 - 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. 4 So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one

another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.” **5** But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. **6** However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Paul certainly had a different expectation. The Bible doesn't say that Paul said his last prayers and waited to die.

Maybe some of us, because of past experiences, have lost hope. If that is the case, then God wants us to have hope again. God wants to raise our expectations!

Let your expectation be determined by what God's word says.

It may well be that as Paul was bitten by that serpent he set his expectation on **Psalms 91:13**: “You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall tread underfoot”.

Or maybe in **Mark 16:18** – “They shall take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them.”

We have to be a people with a different expectation.

The people ended up thinking that Paul as a god. Maybe they saw the God of hope in him. People will not see God if you worry like them, if there is nothing unusual about you.

3. Unusual miracles

The third thing that accompanied Paul was “unusual miracles”.

V.7-8 - *In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. 8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.*

First, the natives of the island showed unusual kindness. Now it was Paul's turn. Paul's kindness was even more unusual because it was supernatural! He prayed, laid hands on Publius and he was healed. That was unusual, it was miraculous.

Acts 19:11-12 - *11 Now God worked **unusual miracles** by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.*

4. Unusual Results

V.9 – *So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had*

diseases also came and were healed.

Those are unusual results. Every person in the island was healed! Sickness was eradicated from that island. That certainly is extraordinary and unusual.

In 1924, John G Lake preached in Spokane, Washington (USA). 100 000 healings were reported and documented. A newspaper wrote: “*Rev. Lake through divine healing, has made Spokane the healthiest city in the world, according to United States’ statistics*”. That article was backed up by a report from what was known then as the “U.S. Surgeon General’s Office”.

Conclusion

Is life simply a succession of unfortunate events that we can’t escape and are we helpless in this world? No. Thank God. We can shake off serpents into the fire, we can live with

unusual favour,
unusual hope,
unusual miracles and
unusual results.