

Without The Lord, What Do You Have?

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Acts 27: 31. "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

Paul gave good counsel to those who sailed with him. At the start of the trip they didn't listen to him but by the later part of the journey they had learned that he knew more than they did about the voyage. The storm that they were in lasted for weeks and they had given up hope of surviving. The ship was their refuge and to be out of it and into the storm was to die. Some of the soldiers had started to lower a small boat out of the ship thinking it would be safer. If they were afraid to stay in the bigger, stronger, vessel how did they think a small boat would stand up in the storm?

Just as the men would have perished outside the ship, we also will perish if we don't abide in our ark of safety. We are safe in Jesus and can survive the storms of life with him. The storms that we face don't just last for days, or weeks, like Paul and his companions faced in the ship, but ours last throughout our life here on earth. As long as we stay with the Lord, trusting in him all the way, we'll reach home one day.

The soldiers and crew of the ship saw the huge waves and the raging storm with fear. The sailors would have seen storms before and their

fear of this one showed the violence of it. To have left a ship in the midst of such a storm and going into a small boat showed panic. When a man is afraid he cannot think clearly and will often make bad decisions. Isn't this what Peter did when he started walking on the water going to Jesus. He had no problem until he stopped looking to Jesus and thought more of where he was and the storm about him. It had been going on before he left the ship - so what changed? Faith was replaced by fear. He focused not on the Lord, but on the wind and the waves.

Peter and the men with Paul, in both cases saw only the storm and the danger it represented. Without Jesus there is reason to fear because we don't have power to save ourselves. We may get along alright for a time but we can't do anything of our own but fail. As staying in the ship illustrated the need to abide in safety, abiding in Jesus is safety for the believer. Sure we may, and will, face storms as we go through life, but we will make it home safely as long as we trust in the Lord. Beware of those who tell you that if you're saved that you will prosper, be healthy, and have smooth sailing through your life. It sounds good but it is not true. The Lord himself said that you would have troubles in this life and he that endured to the end would be saved. If a young Christian is led to think that he will never have trials then he will be discouraged and hurt when they do come. And come they will.

So if we abide in our Lord Jesus, who is our ark of safety, we will survive the storms of life. There are different types of storms in the spiritual life just as there are different types of storms in this world. There will

be storms in our relationships, in health, business, deaths of loved ones, and the storms of temptations that each person faces. Looking to the Lord we will find help that we may be blessed through our life.

Without the Lord what do you have? But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Hebrews 10:27. This is the future of those who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. They face the problems of life alone and have no one who can help them. Some trust in friends, money, power, but these are at best a short term hope. Why do people turn to drugs, alcohol, and the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh? It is to seek to escape the reality of their misery here for a time. They don't realize that such things only increase their hurt and the problems.

Then when this life is threatened by sickness, or accident, and eternity draws close, a person will usually think of God. Then it may be too late after the life is wasted, health is ruined, and there is no one else to turn to. God can, in his mercy, save late in life, but don't take the chance of waiting too long. There is a big difference between two people facing the end of this physical life here when one has lived for the Lord and the other has lived in sin. The believer looks forward to going home and living with the Lord forever. That's what faith and obedience to the Lord brings. Look at **2 Timothy 4:6-8** to see Paul's thoughts about the end of his journey here.

How much better to look forward to meeting the Savior than to fear him?

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TAXES AND MORE TAXES!

BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A KINGDOM, THE ISRAELITES HAD TO PAY FOR THE SUPPORT OF THEIR TABERNACLE AND THE PRIESTS. THIS WAS DONE BY TITHINGS AND OFFERINGS. BUT WHEN KINGS BEGAN TO RULE IT WAS A DIFFERENT THING, AS SAMUEL HAD WARNED THE PEOPLE! TAXES STARTED IN EARNEST THEN! EVERY FARM CROP WAS TAXED, EVERY FLOCK OF SHEEP, ALL FOWL, THE YOUNG OF THE BEASTS OF BURDEN - WHEN A MAN GOT THROUGH WITH THAT, HE STILL HAD TO GIVE HIS TIME - HE HAD TO SERVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONTHS, EVERY YEAR, IN HIS KING'S ARMY! IT WAS WORSE WHEN THE NATION WAS CONQUERED - THEN, BESIDES THE TAXES TO THEIR KING, IT WAS THE BACKBREAKING TRIBUTE TO THE FOREIGN CONQUEROR! NOR WAS IT ANY EASIER WHEN THE NATION WAS THE CONQUEROR! THEN, A MAN HAD TO SPEND MORE TIME IN THE ARMY, COLLECTING THE TRIBUTE FROM THOSE WHO WERE CONQUERED! BY THE TIME THE ROMANS WERE ON THE SCENE, TAX GATHERING WAS PUT OUT AT AUCTION - THE HIGHEST BIDDER WAS GIVEN TROOPS TO ENFORCE HIS GATHERING TAXES FROM THE COMMON MAN! THIS QUOTE FROM II KINGS 23:35, TELLS THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT TAXES "AND JEHOIAKIM GAVE THE SILVER AND THE GOLD TO PHARAOH, BUT HE TAXED THE LAND TO GIVE THE MONEY,....HE EXACTED THE SILVER AND THE GOLD OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND, OF EVERYONE ACCORDING TO HIS TAXATION TO GIVE IT UNTO PHARAOH-NECHOH!" "AD INFINITUM!"



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