We Should Sail for Italy

I. Introduction

A. I like to tell people about night Lynn and I "spent together" was in "pool hall"

1. We were stranded in a snow storm on I-81 near Marion, VA
   a. Hotels were full; a boarding house turned out to be a nursing home
   b. So they opened up the Job Core Training Center recreation hall to us
2. Most of us have had trips where nothing went according to plan
   a. Angelynn and Hannah's 3-day I-81 trip in blizzard was worse than ours
   b. Sometimes trips just don't turn out like you plan

B. In our reading from **Acts 27-28**, Paul had one of those trips

1. In **Acts 23**, Paul is taken in protective custody by the Roman officials
   a. His Jewish enemies were trying to manipulate system to kill him
   b. Felix wanted a bribe and Festus wanted to please the Jews
   c. Paul felt that his only hope was to appeal to Caesar as was his right
      (*Festus said in **25:12**, "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!")*
2. Paul is called to appear before King Agrippa in **Acts 26**
   a. Paul's defense sounds more like a sermon, which is not surprising
      1) **Festus** responds with "*Your great learning is driving you insane*"
      2) **Agrippa** says, "*Do you think that in such a short time you can …*"
         (KJV makes it sound a lot better, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian")
   b. Both agree Paul is innocent and should be free, but he appealed to Caesar
3. So in **Acts 27**, Paul begins a long journey as a prisoner to Rome
   a. The irony was, if Paul hadn't appealed, he may have been released
      1) But then, life is like that sometimes… God is like that sometimes
      2) An old Yiddish proverb reminds us: "*Man plans and God laughs*"
   b. We've sang about our journey through life as we are "marching to Zion"
   c. We can draw some parallels from Paul's journey to Rome

II. We Should Set Sail for Italy: Text

A. Luke goes into great detail on Paul's journey to Rome

1. **Question**: Why does Luke include such great detail?
   a. It could have been because Luke there with Paul (one of "*we sections*")
   b. Maybe he includes it for its dramatic impact?
      1) In movies or TV, you throw in a car chase to add excitement
      2) In ancient literature, it was a shipwreck (Jonah and Odyssey)
   c. More likely, Luke is emphasizing God's protection and providence.
2. At any rate, was no three hour tour on the Minnow— 6 months ordeal
   a. The ship was large enough for 276 men and cargo (*point of sailng ships*)
      1) Things went wrong from the start; the winds were against them
      2) So the trip was delayed, and it got into the winter season
   b. Paul, a seasoned traveler, declared it dangerous to continue (**27:9-10**)
   c. They pressed on from Fair Havens to Phoenix to find better harbor
      1) A hurricane-force storm drove out to sea past Cauda.
      2) They were battered around Adriatic Sea for two weeks
3. Of course, Paul would never stoop to say "I t*old you*" (**27:21-22**)

B. On day 14, Paul repeats God's promise of a coming rescue (**27: 34**)

1. They made it to land the next day, but the ship was lost
   a. Soldiers were about to kill prisoners , but the centurion stopped them
   b. Just as Paul promised, they all survived the storm without single loss
2. They were, however, marooned on the island Malta (*south of Sicily*)
   a. While gathering firewood, Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake
      1) His fellow-travellers saw this as karma, but Paul literally shook it off
      2) NT miracles are like this; very matter of fact and with little hoopla
   b. Paul also heals father of a local official, and they are treated well by locals
   c. After wintering in Malta, they continue on to Rome in Spring
3. The book of Acts ends un-dramatically with Paul in Rome (**28:30-31**)

III. We Should Set Sail for Italy: Our Journey

A. Paul journey to Rome reminds us that life is never really that planned

1. Paul had planned wanted to visit Rome at some point (**Rom 1:15**, **15:23**)
   a. But he never thought it would be all-expense-paid trip by Caesar
      1) We never know what good things or challenges God has in store
      2) Never know how He can use our struggles to bless us powerfully
   b. Yes, we need to pray and plan… and pray—but God is always God
   c. There will always be unexpected turns and twists; life is never as plan
2. We must avoid the ancient heresy that God always blesses good people
   a. Heresy: If you do good things, then good things will always happen
      1) That is the heresy that led Job's friends to accuse and attack Him
      2) That heresy today leaves many unprepared for life's twists/turns
   b. Hebrew writer wants us to see twists/turns as Father's disciple (**12:7**)

B. Paul's trip, like many of ours, was wrecked by impatience

1. Ship's pilot/owners were impatient to get on with their trip
   a. They ignore Paul's warnings & did not listen to God
   b. We tend want what we want when we want it; it is hard to wait
   c. That why so often our credit card bill is larger than our pay stub!
2. We will never travel well through life unless we have patience

C. There are two different Greek words translated "patience"

1. First is **μακροθυμία**, compound of "*long*" and "*anger*"
   a. **KJV**: "*long-suffering*." "*Charity suffers long*" (**1 Cor 13**)
   b. Best illustration of long-suffering is God himself (**Rom 2:4, 2 Pet 3:9**)
   c. We'll never well our finish journey without being *long-tempered*
2. Second word is **ὑπομονή**, which means "*endurance*" or "*perseverance*"
   *(*Jesus says "*by **standing firm** you will gain life."(**Lk 21:19**) Patience is "standing firm"*
   a. It is this standing firm that brings spiritual character (**Rom 5:3-4**)
   b. It is this standing firm that allows us to finish well (**Heb 10:35-36**)
3. Our journey through life can't be travelled well without patience

D. Two words are related, but they can seem to focus on different things

1. We practice **long-suffering** with respect to people.
   a. In any family, at times you just must put up with one another
   b. There is no understanding or seeing eye to eye… just put up with them
   c. Patience is that ability to suffer long and put up with other people
2. We practice **endurance** with respect to life situations and troubles
   a. At times, it does seem true that "*life is tough and then you die*"
      1) Sometimes we overcome difficulties; sometimes we learn to cope
      2) Sometimes we can do neither, and we just have to endure
   b. It is patience that allows us to hold on and endure despite difficult times

E. There is one more type of patience we must have — *a patience with God*

1. We know that Bible School verse about how great is heaven (**Rom 8:18**)
   a. Do we think that's true? Sure. But do you FEEL that it's true now?
   b. Sometimes it feels that God is just taking too long to work things out!
2. Through the shipwreck, Paul was focused on God's promises
   a. No one will be lost; only ship will be lost (**27:22**)
   b. If all stay with the ship, all will be saved (**27:31**)
   c. None of them would lose a hair from on head (**27:34**)
3. OK, it's especially hard to believe when your ship is getting tossed around!
4. That is when we need to have the greatest focus on the promises of God

IV. Conclusion

A. Talk about a trip gone bad—Tom Hanks' in *The Terminal*

1. He lands in JFK to find his passport/visa voided
2. Can't enter US or go home; lives in terminal *(true story)*

B. Sometimes our tip leaves us like strangers (**1 Pet 1:17**, **2:11**)

1. We can sometimes feel like men/women w/o a country
2. We need to have patience… and don't five up the ship!