

## How To Shake Off An Attack

Open with video of lion attack

1 Thess. 2:17-18 “We, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, but not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. We wanted to come to you – even I, Paul, time and again – but satan hindered us.”

Since the beginning of the year, we have heard many prophetic words about this year being the year of “The Open Door.”

I want to remind you that every time the Lord says there is an open door, the enemy is there to stop you right at the open door to hinder you from fulfilling God’s purposes for your life.

- Sometimes we get through the door to find that satan is waiting on the other side of the door.

What do you do when you run into a wall or you are in God’s will and something happens that hinders or resists you from fulfilling what you know God has told you to do?

v.18 “But satan **hindered** us.”

1. **Hindered** – *enkopto* = “to cut into, the impeding of persons by breaking up the road or by placing obstacles sharply in the path of someone.”
  - The detaining of a person un-necessarily by hindrances along the way of reaching others or a goal.
  - In this use of 1Thess. 2:18 – the hindering of the progress of the Christian life.
  - It describes a person who has made his plans and has the destination for his way mapped out and runs into *enkopto*.
    - The way of the road is so deteriorated that it becomes impassable, bumpy; so bad the trip had to be canceled or another road found.
    - This was the road you needed to get to your destination – but you have hit an impasse.
    - You had your ticket, invested your money, made your plans and now you are on the way, but there are hindrances so severe; you are no longer able to take this route.
  - That may be describing your life in several areas:

- Your health issues may have caused your plans and life to take on a whole new outlook. You may not be able to work now, are receiving disability, and feel **“benched”** by life.
- Your plans for a wonderful family may be hindered by a divorce or death of a spouse and now you are faced with the challenge of finding out “who you are without your spouse or your child.” You feel lost.
- You may have been in the dream job you always sought; but you are being replaced by someone who they found to work for less but doesn’t know half of what you knew about the job.

### **So, what do we do now?**

- After you recover from the shock/trauma – hopefully, you back up, size up the situation, and begin to take another road.
- This happened to Paul – again and again and again – multiple times.

As Paul endeavored to visit the Thessalonians to encourage them, he hit many impasses which stopped him from reaching his goal.

#### 2. The second usage of the word **hindered**:

- This describes an athletic contest where a runner is running his best race, when suddenly another runner comes along side of him, elbows him, and knocks him out of the race, causing him to lose his leading position.
- This is the way Paul uses the word in this verse.

#### **Paul uses this word to describe what happened to himself:**

- We would think and expect this to happen to the common believer; but not to Paul the great Apostle. This even happens to the well known.
- Nevertheless, he shares this experience with all of us to let us know that all of us are subject to the tactics of the enemy to hinder us from fulfilling God’s goals for us.

Who here today has been hindered in a life’s goal or a ministry goal or desire to fulfill what the Lord has called you to do?

- You never expected this one thing [or several] to have happened that has now created this impasse to you fulfilling your destiny.
- You’ve had that experience of feeling like satan or someone came along side of you and “elbowed you right out of the race you were running.”

Anyone that has lived life has experienced this.

### **What do you do when you've had this happen to you?**

- You've been elbowed out of the race you were doing so well in.
- You've experienced a shipwreck in your finances, marriages, family, future and present health issues?

### **How do you respond to that?**

Acts 27-28:31. Story of Paul's shipwrecked life adventures and how the Lord brought him through.

Review: Acts 9:15 at Paul's conversion, the Lord told Ananias that – "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

Acts 23:11 "but the following night, the Lord stood by him [Paul] and said: Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

- Paul had words from the Lord from his early conversion days until well within his ministry years that he would testify of Jesus in Rome and to other world leaders.
- Now through many years of preaching the Gospel, starting churches, training leaders, being persecuted; he is on a ship enroute to Rome as a prisoner of Israel and under Roman guard to appear to appeal to Caesar his innocence of charges.
- Paul would be the first human to stand before Caesar to preach the Gospel – he knew this was part of his destiny. It was God's will for him to go to Rome – it was the fulfillment of the prophetic word he received at his conversion.

### **The Journey:**

Acts 27:1-8 The journey to Rome begins with Paul and others as prisoners under Roman guard.

- Typical sailing for the Mediterranean Sea, rough waves, they clung to the coastline.
- They spent many days at the harbor of Fair Havens near the city of Lasea.
- The season was now Sept – Oct and the weather turning winter; sailing was worse.
- V. 10-11- Paul perceives by the Spirit that it is now dangerous to sail and he is warned that the voyage will end in disaster and much loss of lives and cargo if they proceed.
- But the Roman centurion persuaded by the owner of the ship overrode Paul's warning.
- Vv. 13-14 "As they proceeded, they encountered a tempestuous head wind called **Euroclydon.**"

- **Euroclydon** = a southeast wind that stirs up broad waves.”
- This wind had a name – as our hurricanes do, because it was an annual weather event.
- The storm dropped out of Europe – that’s why it is called **Euro**-clydon, and it would drop into the Mediterranean Sea.
  
- It was the most feared and serious of all storms on the Mediterranean.
- Most who sailed into this storm never made it out of this storm.
  
- Paul is on his way to appear before Caesar to preach the Gospel to him as was a fulfillment of the prophecy on his life and now he is faced and caught in the worst storm of his life.
  
- Vv. 16-20 – the storm was so horrific, they sailed this way and that way being blown about by the uncontrollable winds.
  - They threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship so they could maneuver better.
  - They threw the tackle of the ship overboard – they had no way of guiding the ship fully.
  - After many days of neither sun nor stars appearing, and the storm not lessening but getting worse – all hope that they would be saved was finally given up.
  - In the natural, there seemed no deliverance for them was available.
  - No calling the Coast Guard to save them.
  
- Vv. 21-26 – “After long abstinence from food [fasting], then Paul stood in the midst of them and said: “Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.  
And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whom I belong and whom I serve, saying: Do not be afraid, Paul; **you must be brought before Caesar**; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you. Therefore, take heart-[be of good cheer], men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island.”
  
- Regardless of what you fear, what you see – you have a destiny to appear in Rome before Caesar to witness to him of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**When you are in a storm and receive a prophetic word – take that word that you might win a good warfare and obtain the promise the Lord has given you.**

- Paul had no idea what he would encounter on this trip, but now he has received a word about how the Lord was going to be with him and bring him through to completion of the word the Lord had spoken over him years ago.
- He received this word on the fourth night they were in the storm and they still had 10 more days to go before they saw the answer.
  - 10 more days, they fought day and night to survive this storm.
  - No eating, no real sleeping, sea sick, scared to death they would die.
  - While the rest were fighting for their lives, Paul had received the word that he must appear before Caesar and he had peace.
- Vv. 27-44 “The 14<sup>th</sup> night came, they sensed they were near land, so they sounded [for depth] of water lest they run aground.
  - Dropped anchors fearing they would fall upon rocks.
  - They held this position till the break of day when they could tell where land was.
  - Paul encouraged them to take food after 14 days of no eating.
  - He spoke over them to take and be encouraged “that not one hair of your head will be lost.”
  - He gave thanks to God in the presence of them all – they were mostly pagan worshipers.
  - They were encouraged and by now; began to believe Paul had some insight and knew what he was talking about. All 276 persons on the ship.
- V. 39 - Day came: they didn’t recognize the land, but saw the bay would be good for heading the ship that way.
  - It was a harbor with a sandy beach – which was exactly what they needed to bring the ship in safely.
  - They discuss what they should do; and decided to go for it and head the ship into this harbor. It looked like clear sailing - **BUT!**
  - They ran the ship aground where the prow became stuck and the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.
  - Here is Paul, whose only desire is to get to Rome and fulfill the destiny the Lord has for him to appear before Caesar to preach the Gospel and the ship all around him is coming apart.
  - The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners, lest they escape, but the Centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose.
  - The Centurion commanded them to jump overboard, grab the ships planking and swim to shore.
  - It was so that they escaped safely to land.

**Wow – what a two-week period these guys had just experienced.**

- Caught in a horrific storm, lost all the cargo [money], lost the ships tackle, almost lost their own lives – lost at sea.

**But it wasn't over yet!**

- What else could happen?

**Chapter 28: 1-10**

- They all swam or dog paddled to shore to save their lives.
- **What does faith do when it has experienced a shipwreck? Faith swims!**
- The wrong time to have a theological discussion is when you're in the middle of a storm.
- Paul could have cried out: "I just don't understand why this is happening to me," as he treaded water to get ashore.
- "All I wanted to do was be in the will of God. I asked the Lord to use me and look what's happening to me now, I'm going to die and never fulfill my destiny."
- Now Paul, like everyone else is having to just swim for his life to make it to safety.

They escaped to the Island of Malta, but it was inhabited by **barbarous** people.

- Great! They had just survived 14 days of shipwreck; only to find themselves on an island of historically unfriendly people.
- But, God had another plan in mind – these people showed them **unusual kindness**.
- "They started a fire and made them all welcome – but
- It was raining and it was winter – cold."
- They all could look back at the ship and see all their possessions being lost.
- Paul could have bemoaned all that had happened – he just wanted to do God's will, go to Rome, preach to Caesar and fulfill his destiny.
- Now, they survived, but it's cold and raining –
- How many bad days can a person take?
- It would be hard for this day to get worse: fighting the sea and seasickness for 14 days, fighting hunger for 14 days, the only possessions he has are on his back, his luggage, his passport all are sinking to the bottom of the sea.
- Now, it's cold and raining, and we're on an island inhabited by barbarians.

What does faith do when it's shipwrecked?

Faith swims

What does faith do when it's cold?

Faith builds a fire

v. 3 "As they gather sticks to be laid on the fire, [Paul was a team player and was gathering a bunch of wood for the fire], when a viper comes out of the bundle Paul is carrying and fastens [literally bites so deep, it gets stuck] on his hand."

- REALLY – what else can happen? And we think we have bad days?

“The natives saw the viper [extremely poisonous snake] and deduced that Paul must be the worst of the criminals on the ship. He has escaped the shipwreck, but now fate has it that the viper will kill him.”

“Though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow him to live.”

- That’s the way many folks think when something bad happens to someone:  
“They must have done something wrong, they are suffering for something they did – vengeance is coming to them, they are reaping what they sowed.”  
Religious people respond this way.

**But Paul was right in the middle of God’s will for his life, the devil was just creating a hindrance, an impasse so Paul couldn’t fulfill God’s will.**

**v. 5 – Paul shook off the viper into the fire and suffered no harm.”**

“They waited for him to swell up, fall down dead; but after they looked for a long time and saw that no harm came to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.”

**What does faith do when it gets bit by a snake?**

**Faith shakes it off!**

If Paul had given in to what had happened, he would have fallen dead on the spot. But he had a word of prophecy from God that he would appear in Rome and minister to Caesar the Gospel.

- He wasn’t going to die in any sea.
- He wasn’t going to be killed by any barbarians.
- And no snakebite was going to put him in the ground.
- This man had a destiny/a word from God that he was going to fulfill and when that snake bit him, he shook it off.
- **“Shook it off”** means he had to violently shake to get free from the viper.
  - It did not easily come off or let go – but Paul had to violently shake it off.

As you live your life as a Child of God, a believer, a minister, an ambassador for the Kingdom of God –

- There will be many opportunities for you to get bit by snakes.
- There will be some people who even smile at you while they inject the venom into you.
- **What do you do when you’ve lost it all in shipwreck, been bitten by a snake?**

**Options:**

1. **Get hurt and withdraw and say:**

- “I’ll never trust again, I’ll never love like that again – [remember: You have to love like you’ve never been hurt]
- “I just don’t know if I can continue to follow Jesus because there are so many hypocrites and people who have hurt me.”
- “I can’t come to that church anymore, there are people there who have hurt me.”

**That’s exactly what the devil wants you to do**

- When you encounter hindrances to fulfilling God’s will for your life – the devil is hoping that you will just give up – give in and walk away and not fulfill God’s will for your life.

2. **You decide to “Shake it Off”**

- Declaring, proclaiming, standing and believing and fighting for the destiny the Lord has given you since before you were even born.
- You will fulfill your destiny if you shake it off.

**It’s not easy to shake some things off:**

- You will have to work hard to shake it off.
- You will have to shake, and shake and shake.
- **But if you will not give up – it will fall off into the fire and you will feel no harm.**

-0-