

Heed the Warning!! (Slide 1)

Reading Acts 20:17-32

(Slide 2) What is a warning? From the dictionary:

Warning: a statement or event that indicates a possible or **impending** danger, problem, or other **unpleasant** situation.

We have a variety of warnings in our everyday life. Here are a few examples.

(Slide 3) A can of shaving cream: On the side of the can there generally is a warning similar to this; "Warning or Caution; contents under extreme pressure! Do not puncture!" And so, most people would understand what that means and heed the warning and wouldn't use any device to puncture the can.

The lids on a cup of coffee or hot chocolate at a fast-food restaurant state; "*Caution-contents extremely hot*" or "*Caution-Hot!*" Of course that label is used as a way to avoid liability in being sued when someone spills it on their lap. Most of us who are reasonable already are aware the contents are hot and will heed the warning.

Movies have ratings which should be viewed as warnings. Some ratings warn that the content within the movie isn't suitable for children under 13 or in many cases children under 17. So, responsible parents will heed the warning and not allow their children to see these movies. In reality, a great many movies aren't suitable for any age group.

There are many parts of the world and even within the US that officials will advise against traveling too. I can remember many years ago we were playing in a 3 on 3 Basketball tournament in Peoria in which they had barricaded the streets in a certain part of town to prevent cars from driving

through the playing area. At one section, a policeman stood at the barricade and discouraged people from walking in that area because it wasn't safe. He issued a warning describing the potential of becoming victimized by robbery and possibly physically assaulted. So we heeded the warning and stayed clear.

Yet, despite all the variety of warnings many people put their lives on the line to visit dangerous areas for one reason or another.

There are countless products that warn users; "Do not ingest!" In other words "don't drink it-don't inhale it!" Sadly, many don't heed the warning and do so with devastating consequences. Sometimes young people do these things following a "Tik-Tok" challenge.

Warnings are a vital part of our lives intended most generally to keep us safe and healthy. Therefore, warnings are created by someone who knows what they're talking about and what the consequences can be.

In our reading, the Apostle Paul warned or admonished the elders of the church in **Acts 20** that they should be aware of those who would infiltrate the church to corrupt it. These were even those who would rise up in their mist and distort the truth.

(Slide 4) Shortly after this warning, the Apostle Paul in Acts 21, was harassed by his own people, seized by them, and was nearly stoned to death. He was dragged out of the temple at the behest of Chief Priest and the religious leaders of the Day.

This circumstance created such a commotion that word of what was happening came to the attention of the Roman Commander at Jerusalem and he took with him several soldiers and centurions to see what was going on. When they arrived they were still beating Paul but stopped when they saw the commander, soldiers and centurions coming.

The scene was so chaotic with one group shouting one thing and the other group shouting another that the commander could not make *heads or tails* as to what was happening. So he took Paul in custody. You might say protective custody.

Paul, nearly beaten to death, requested to speak to his accusers and the commander allowed him to do so. Paul spoke about what he had done before his conversion and what happened on the way to Damascus with Jesus appearing to him. There, his life took a 180!

The jews listened to him speak until he spoke of the Martyr Stephen and that his mission was to bring the "Good News" to the Gentiles.

They were so repulsed by what he said that they raised their voice in unison saying; (Slide 5) ***"Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!" Acts 22:22***

Innocent or guilty, the Romans had a dastardly way of interrogating a person.

Acts 22:24 (Slide 6)

the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

That not only seems unfair but backwards. Shouldn't they have scourged his accusers to get their information?

As they stretched him out to beat nearly the rest of life out of him, Paul spoke out to the centurion; (Slide 7) ***"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?" Acts 22:25b***

When the commander found out he was a roman citizen he feared Roman law and released Paul and ordered his accusers to confront Paul face to face.

As he stood before the high priest *Ananias* and the *council* Paul gave his defense. Paul recognized that there in the audience some Pharisees and Sadducees (*a sect of jews who don't believe in the resurrection from the dead, nor angels, nor spirit*) and that is exactly what he spoke about.

Acts 23:6 (Slide 8)

But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!"

Paul's strategy was truthful and masterful. The Pharisees and Sadducees got into a heated argument with the Pharisee's saying; (Slide 9) ***"We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"*** Acts 23:9b

The uproar was so great that the commander had to take Paul by force out the hands of the Jews fearing they would render his body to pieces.

The Jews continued to plot against Paul with some taking an oath of fasting until after Paul was killed. This conspiracy was overheard by Paul's nephew and he reported the conspiracy to the commander.

Paul was then moved and brought to Felix the governor and held until his accusers could once again arrive to bring their charge. Again, the Jews accused him of defiling the Temple, distorting their way of worship and fooling people into believing in the way.

Once again, Paul was given his chance to speak. His message was about the resurrection of the righteous because of the resurrection of Jesus.

Acts 24:10-15 (Slide 10)

10 When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded:

“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, 11 since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. (Slide 11) 12 Neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot. 13 Nor can they prove to you the charges of which they now accuse me. 14 But this I admit to you, (Slide 12) that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; 15 having a hope in God, which these men (Slide 13) cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Paul continues his defense before his accusers and the Roman leadership including Festus, who said he was crazy for believing that a dead man could rise again and King Agrippa, who stated that Paul nearly convinced him to become a christian. He finally appeals his case to Caesar and that is who he is headed to see in Acts 27.

Paul and other prisoners were escorted onto the **Adramyttian ship** in custody of a centurion named *Julius* of the battalion, *Augustan*.

Adramyttian was opposite the island of *Lesbos*. The ship they boarded traveled along the coast of Asia.

It wasn't until boarding this ship that Paul was finally allowed to receive care from his friends. Remember, Paul was severely mistreated by the jews nearly stoning him to death.

Acts 27:3 (Slide 14)

The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.

On their journey they transferred to another ship sailing directly to Italy. On that ship is where they encountered the "anger of the sea" in the form of tremendous winds. The Bible writer Luke says they traveled with great difficulty.

The travel apparently became more dangerous as recorded in:

Acts 27:9a (Slide 15)

When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over,

This period of time is thought to be in September or even October which were difficult months to travel by sea.

Paul recognizing their peril and without doubt, advised by the Spirit, issued this stark warning:

Acts 27:9b-10 (Slide 16)

Paul began to admonish them, 10 and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."

Loss of cargo, ship, and their lives!!

The centurion in his mind compared what Paul said and what he believed was the experience of the pilot and captain and chose to listen to the latter.

Acts 27:11 (Slide 17)

But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.

Turns out Paul was right. At one point moderate winds replaced the powerful winds so they thought they were in the clear. However, they soon encountered a ***violent wind, called Euraquilo. (Acts 27:14)*** In our moderate time we would call such a powerful wind a “northeaster.” They could not fight the power of the wind so they allowed it to carry them. It was a terrible race against time to keep the ship upright.

They were in this fierce battle for sometime and had not eaten for days, but, guided by the spirit, Paul was “cool and collected” you might say because his faith was in God.

Acts 27:21-26 (Slide 18)

21 When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, “Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. 22 Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, (Slide 19) for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, 24 saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; (Slide 20) and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’ 25 Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. 26 But we must run aground on a certain island.”

At one point the sailors of the ship tried to cast the *dinghies* of the ship into the sea to escape what they thought would be a devastating shipwreck against the rocks. Paul told the centurion and the soldiers that unless they remained in the ship they would surely die.

I’ve left out a lot in this story but suffice to say Paul warned them because he knew what he was talking about. The ship was lost, but 276 people were saved!!!

Heed the Warning!! (Slide 21)

“Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at Hand” is a warning!

“Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” is a warning.

Galatians 6:7-8 (Slide 22)

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

The message today is that there are many warnings in the Bible and unless we *“Heed the Warning”* we will be lost!

Invitation

The invitation, however, is a time to encourage. You have heard the warning now may we encourage you to be “born again.” Buried with Christ Jesus in baptism having your sins washed away by His blood.

Perhaps you have been baptized but have not lived up to your commitment. Apart from Christ we are lost. We would encourage you to return to Him. We will pray for you and with you to help restore your faith.

Please let us know how we can help you this day.

Reading:

Acts 20:17-32

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them,

“You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears

and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you]overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

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