

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

People Can Be Fickle
Acts 28:1-6

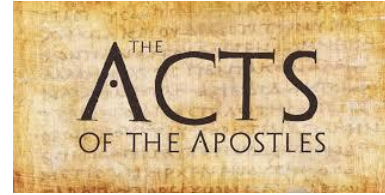
July 10, 2024

No. 29

I think we could all agree, people can be fickle.

What does it mean to be fickle?

Indecisive, unsteady, unreliable, erratic



We are going to see a group of people who fit this description.

Remember,

Paul and the crew had just survived a terrible storm in the Mediterranean Sea. The ship and the cargo were lost but the men made it safely to shore.

Some swam and some held on to pieces of the ship and drifted in.

Acts 28:1 *When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.*

“Malta” its name means “to escape” because it was formerly a refuge for ships in stormy weather.

v.2 *The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.*

The King James version calls them “barbarous” people. But that doesn’t do them justice.

The Greeks called them barbarous people, but that’s because they spoke in an unintelligible tongue and not the Greek language.

v.2 *The natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.*

It’s something that the natives received foreigners and showed them hospitality.

Perhaps it wasn’t uncommon since ships may have often sought refuge there.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

v.3 Something we see about Paul. Here he is, the great apostle, probably tired, hungry maybe even discouraged a bit, but he is working.

Hard times do not dissolve responsibilities.

A responsible person will get it done, because that's responsibility is.

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire,

Remember,

Greatness is demonstrated through servanthood.

One man said; (Barclay)

"It is only the little man who refuses the little task."

You never know who is watching when you do the little thing. That may be the person to promote you to the big thing.

Jesus said;

He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

Lu 16:10

And then, uh oh!

a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

A viper is unlike other serpents in that it brings forth its young alive. Other snakes lay eggs and then the eggs are hatched.

It was sleeping among the sticks until it felt the heat.

v.4 *When the natives saw the creature*

This was a little concerning. The word for "creature", sometimes translated beast is the word therion, very close to Therrien.

So,

When the natives saw the creature

hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another,

"Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

They figured,

The sea didn't get him but the snake did.

Justice is always served, somehow, someday.

Indeed,

And the justice not served on the earth will be served for all of

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

eternity.

v.5 *However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.*

Same word used in:

Lu 9:5 Jesus said; *"And as for those who do not receive you, as you go out from that city, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."*

Kind of a nonchalant shaking.

Paul didn't seem to be startled by the incident.

After all, he's been:

Whipped, stoned, beaten, robbed, shipwrecked, etc.

What's a little snake attached to his hand?

So,

He's bitten.

The natives see just justice being served.

He shakes off the snake

v.6 *But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time*

(they're watching)

and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

They took him from being a murderer to now a god.

Is that fickle? I think so.

How easy it is to form an opinion of someone with really getting to know them.

In this case, they just jumped at assumptions and were wrong both times.

We have to watch out for fickleness and fickle people.

When the Israelites came out of Egypt, a mixed multitude also accompanied them.

They saw the miracles and the power of God.

They were impressed but not converted.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Num 11:4 *The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?"*

v.5 *"We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,*

v.6 *but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."*

Now;

The power of God and His miracles meant nothing. What mattered was their own bellies.

We need to be careful that we do not fall into the same trap. If God is God, then follow Him.

Follow Him faithfully.

Fickleness can also be contagious.

I Cor 15:33 *Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."*

Did you ever watch a football game?

When the home team is winning its nothing but cheers.

But when they are losing, the boos come out.

So much for committed fans.

Point being; know what you believe.

Search out the matter.

Pr 25:2 *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*

Ie. God may conceal but it is noble to seek it out for yourself.