**They Kindled a Fire**

*Acts 28:1-2*

**Introduction**

1. Having appealed to Caesar after being accused falsely by the Jews, Paul was sent to Rome by ship.
   1. The journey was made in three different ships – Caesarea to Myra; Myra to Malta; Malta to Puteoli (city in Italy – then to Rome on land).
   2. In Myra, put on an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy.
   3. Faced a great tempest, and seeing land, attempted to take the ship ashore, but ran the ship aground and the violent waves tore the ship apart.
   4. All on board, including Paul, made it safely to the shore of the island Malta.
2. When they reached the island, natives showed them great care and hospitality – **Acts 28:1-2**
   1. ***“Unusual kindness”*** – i.e. this was unexpected, and above and beyond. ***(“extraordinary kindness,” NASB***)
   2. How? – kindled a fire, made them feel welcome – because of the rain and cold.
3. The actions of the natives of Malta show how much simple things can mean to those in need.
4. Spiritually, there is a need for kindling fires with the supply from God for our brothers and sisters in Christ as we live in a cold world.
5. The Cold We Face
6. Trial and Tribulation
   1. **Acts 14:22** – enter kingdom through tribulations (Paul after being stoned, left for dead)
      1. Must – i.e. it is necessary.
         1. Necessary to test faith – **1 Peter 1:6-9** – but at the end is the reward.
      2. We are appointed to suffering.
   2. **Romans 8:20** – subjected to futility.
      1. God purposely did not spare us from the calamities of life under the sun after we became Christians.
      2. It is His desire that His followers know better than ever that this world isn’t home – **Hebrews 11:13, 16** – trial and tribulation enforce this.
   3. Christians aren’t spared from difficulty because they are Christians. If anything, there is more difficulty presented:
      1. Old problems don’t stop:
         1. Subject to famine – **Acts 11:27-30**
         2. Death – **1 Thessalonians 4:13-14**
         3. Etc. – we are still subject to all the effects of a sin-ridden world.
      2. New problems directly related to following Christ:
         1. Persecution – **2 Timothy 3:12**
         2. Ostracism – **1 Peter 4:4**
7. Worldliness
   1. Our whole life on earth is a test of faith for the day of judgment to unveil. We are bombarded with evil and must resist.
   2. Like the apostles, we are not taken out of the world, but are still to be separate – **John 17:15-17**
      1. Kept from the evil one through the word.
      2. Requires work on our part – **Ephesians 6:10-13** – made to stand, but are in a fight – struggle, wrestle.
   3. While we are adequately equipped to gain victory, such is still a difficulty to endure.
      1. Example of Lot – **2 Peter 2:7-8** – called righteous, but experienced great difficulty living in the ungodly city.
      2. We can cause ourselves more problems by purposefully “pitching our tent toward Sodom.” However, regardless of how well we avoid the evil, we are still surrounded by it.
      3. We ***“walk through the valley of the shadow of death” – Psalm 23:4*** (Spiritually)
   4. Every day we are presented with temptations to do what we know we must not – **Galatians 5:16-17**
   5. We must resist Satan – **1 Peter 5:8-9**
8. The Burden of Doing Good
   1. In all of this we are expected to remain faithful – **1 Corinthians 15:58**
   2. We know our “labor is not vain in the Lord,” but it can still feel burdensome:
      1. **1 John 5:3** – commandments not burdensome.
      2. **Matthew 11:29-30** – burden is light.
      3. How do we reconcile?
      4. **Galatians 6:5, 9** – bear own load, do not grow weary while doing good.
         1. ***“load”*** – in context – walking in the Spirit – i.e. obeying the Lord’s teaching always.
         2. This is not always easy – it is burdensome.
         3. However, it is not, because it is light, and leads to glory – reap what you sow – **(vv. 8-9)**
   3. While we seek to do the Lord’s will always, there can be times of discouragement:
      1. Above – trials, tribulations, worldliness.
      2. Within – strife among brethren, unfaithful brethren, errors and sin to combat, etc.
      3. We can become “weary,” but we must not.
9. God has provided us things to combat the cold.
10. The Means of Warmth
11. The Word of God
    1. It is a light/lamp – **Psalm 119:105** – guiding us.
    2. It is warmth in the cold – **Luke 24:17, 25-27, 32** – sad about Jesus’ death, told Jesus (not known), Jesus explained the OT concerning Himself, hearts burned
       1. Cold – sad by the events of Jesus’ death.
       2. Warmed – by the word of God taught by Jesus concerning what the events fulfilled in prophecy.
    3. The word of God provides the warmth of comfort – **Romans 15:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4**
12. Prayer
    1. Prayer is especially effective during difficult times – **James 5:13, 16**
    2. It is our avenue into the presence of God where we long to be – **Revelation 5:8**
       1. Prayer ascends into God’s temple from anywhere – **Jonah 2:4-7** (while in the sea)
    3. It affords us peace in times of adversity as we give our troubles to God – **Philippians 4:6-7**
13. Fellowship with Jesus
    1. At Paul’s defense it was not the company of others which brought him comfort and strength, but the Lord Himself – **2 Timothy 4:16-18**
       1. Jesus was not there with Paul literally.
       2. He was with Paul in spirit, i.e. in fellowship with Paul.
    2. When we do the things the Lord requires we have Him with us – **1 Corinthians 5:4** – ***“with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ”***
    3. He won’t leave or forsake us – **Hebrews 13:5**
       1. This requires our adherence to His law – **Amos 3:3**
    4. Fellowship with Jesus – being faithful to Him, and knowing you are right with Him – allows us to conquer any cold – **Acts 7:54-56** – Stephen given a unique visual of what such means.
14. Fellowship with Christians
    1. While fellowship with the Lord is sufficient for anything we face, in His infinite wisdom God provided us with a family for strength.
    2. Born into a family of those who love you – **1 Peter 1:22; 2:10** – the people of God.
    3. Help from the brethren – **Philippians 2:3-4; 4:2-3; Galatians 6:1-2**
    4. Ultimately, as God has provided us warmth individually, we can provide warmth for one another.
15. Kindling a Fire for Others
16. Not Forsaking the Assembly
    1. **Hebrews 10:24-25** – told not to forsake the assembly.
       1. Negative command preceded by the positive – **(v. 24)** – consider one another.
       2. Assembling with the saints is being considerate of the saints – **Philippians 2:4** – looking out for the interests of others.
       3. Idea that you won’t be missed – **1 Corinthians 12:15-19** – you have a function, and such is neglected by forsaking the assembly.
    2. ***“to stir up love and good works”***
       1. I.e. provoke to doing God’s will always.
       2. Edification in worship:
          1. Speaking to each other in song – **Colossians 3:16**
          2. Praying with understanding – **1 Corinthians 14:15-17** – edification in prayer.
          3. Preaching – **Acts 20:7** – an action still involving everyone (**cf. Nehemiah 8:3, 5, 6, 8, 12** – attentiveness, reverence, agreement, understanding, application – i.e. not simply a one sided effort)
       3. ***“exhorting one another”*** – *parakaleo* – to admonish, exhort, to urge one to pursue some course of conduct (VINE)
          1. Love and good works.
          2. Without the assembly we lack in getting the urging to do what is right.
17. Greet One Another
    1. **Romans 16:16** – the command to greet one another.
       1. How can this be a source of warmth for us to get through cold times?
       2. Greet – *aspazomai* – lit. signifies “to draw to oneself” (VINE); to enfold in the arms, i.e. (by implication) to salute, (figuratively) to welcome (STRONG)
          1. ***“holy kiss”*** – kiss was customary of the time, but never done in an inappropriate way.
          2. Hand shake, hug, nod, “Hello,” “how are you,” exchange of pleasantries, etc.
       3. Opposite – avoid, ignore, make feel unwelcome.
          1. Brethren don’t do this to each other.
       4. Recognition brings comfort and encouragement.
          1. Failure of recognition discourages – **cf. 2 John 10-11** – do not greet him.
    2. Paul’s greetings – acknowledgement of many who might not otherwise receive recognition **(vv. 3-15):**
       1. **(vv. 3-5a)** – work and sacrifice acknowledged.
       2. **(v. 5b)** – perhaps first convert.
       3. **(v. 6)** – hard work.
       4. **(v. 7)** – suffering for Christ, longevity of faith.
       5. **(v. 8)** – acknowledged.
       6. **(v. 9)** – worked with Paul.
       7. **(v. 10a)** – approved, perhaps withstood trial.
       8. **(vv. 10b-15)** – those who are faithful, hard workers, recognized by the great apostle.
       9. IT MEANS A LOT TO BE RECOGNIZED.
18. “Continuing Daily with One Accord”
    1. **Hebrews 3:12-14** – told to exhort daily.
       1. Implies more than simply the occasion of the assembly.
       2. Brethren are to be involved in each other’s lives.
    2. **Acts 2:46-47** – the continued with each other on a daily basis.
       1. ***“in the temple”*** – they were gathering together for spiritual activity on days additional to the Lord’s day – “praising God”
       2. ***“house to house”*** – also involved with each other in areas that weren’t necessarily spiritual.
          1. Though, the reason why they were doing this is because of the commonality in Christ they now shared.
          2. The spiritual emphasis draws brethren together in other ways.
    3. **Acts 9:26-28** – after Paul was recognized and extended the right hand of fellowship he was with them “coming in and going out.”
       1. **Acts 1:21** – describing the time Jesus spent with His disciples – seeking replacement for Judas Iscariot – they needed to be one who was involved regularly with, and around the Lord.
       2. “’Went in and out’ is a phrase signifying that He was their constant companion. It expresses in general all the actions of life.” (Commentary on Acts, Gareth L. Reese, pg. 27)
    4. By this continual involvement in each other’s lives we can know each other better, and therefore help each other more effectively.

**Conclusion**

1. Like the natives on Malta, there are small things we can do for others, especially our brethren, to provide “warmth” in this “cold” world.
2. Let us consider what we can do, and then rise up in action.