



# ENDURANCE

HEBREWS 10:36

## Endurance Through Death, Destruction, and Pain

Adapted from "Shipwrecked" series by Rod Loy

Growing up, did you ever dream about how awesome it would be to be shipwrecked? Maybe you could live on a deserted island, have a three-story home, a monkey for a pet, take naps, swim in the ocean whenever you wanted, and defeat pirates in confrontations just like Swiss Family Robison did. How cool would that be?

As a teenager, I could picture myself stranded on Gilligan's island. I would never want to leave. Stranded on a remote island with plenty of fresh fruit to eat, swim anytime I wanted to swim and be surrounded by two beautiful women. The way I looked at it was that one of them would marry me, we would have a beach wedding, and we would live happily ever after.

Shipwrecks in real life are not like the shipwrecks on television. April 27, 1865 the United States experienced a shipwreck like it had never experienced. Read the following account:

In the early hours of April 27th, 1865, mere days after the end of the Civil War, the Sultana burst into flames along the Mississippi River. The Sultana was a 260-foot-long wooden steamboat, built in Cincinnati in 1863, which regularly transported passengers and freight between St. Louis and New Orleans on the Mississippi River.

In order to fulfill the lucrative contract, J. Cass Mason, the Sultana's captain, opted to patch the leaky boiler rather than complete more extensive and time-consuming repairs. Fearing that his colleagues were taking bribes to transport prisoners on other boats, Union Army Captain George Williams, who oversaw the operation, hastily ordered that all former prisoners at the parole camp and hospital at Vicksburg be transported on the Sultana. Although it was designed to only hold 376 persons, more than 2,000 Union troops were crowded onto the steamboat - more than five times its legal carrying capacity.

The Sultana steamed north up the Mississippi, but the severe overcrowding and faster river current caused by the spring thaw put increased pressure on its newly

patched boilers. Shortly after leaving Memphis, Tennessee on April 27th, the overstrained boilers exploded, blowing apart the center of the boat and starting an uncontrollable fire. Many of those who were not killed immediately perished as they tried to swim to shore. Of the initial survivors, 200 later died from burns sustained during the incident. Records indicate that 1,800 men died, making the Sultana incident the deadliest maritime disaster in U.S. history.<sup>1</sup>

In real life when you are in a shipwreck, you do not end up on some tropical island. A shipwreck in real life can result in death, destruction, and pain. After the shipwreck, your life feels like a total wreck. Oftentimes you have no control over the shipwreck that hits you. Other times, your shipwreck occurs because of a bad decision. You should have known better, and you probably did, but you are in the middle of a self-induced shipwreck. In this lesson, you will be equipped to help you endure through a shipwreck: one that is your fault, and one that is beyond your control.

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<sup>1</sup> American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/sultana-disaster> (Accessed March 11, 2019)

## COURAGE

**C1:** What are your thoughts as you read/heard the introduction?

**C2:** Describe a time in your life when you have been through a time of destruction or pain? What emotions did you experience? What feelings did you have?

**C3:** Read **Acts 27:1–9 (ESV)** And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. <sup>2</sup> And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. <sup>3</sup> The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. <sup>4</sup> And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. <sup>5</sup> And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. <sup>6</sup> There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. <sup>7</sup> We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. <sup>8</sup> Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. <sup>9</sup> Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,

- Write out at least two concepts from this passage of Scripture.
- How do these concepts help you deepen your love towards God?
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate this love to those around you?

## STRENGTH

**S1:** Read **Acts 27:1-9** from at least four different Bible translations and answer the following:

- Describe a time in your life when you were headed in the wrong direction with danger signs all around you and you kept going.

**S2:** Read Acts **27:10-12 (ESV)** and answer the following:

- Have you ever listened to a wrong voice in your life? What was the result?
- What happens when you follow a crowd who does not always have your best interest and values in mind?
- As you get older, do you find it easier or more difficult to follow the crowd? Why or why not?

**S3:** Read **Acts 27:13 (ESV)** and answer the following:

- Describe a time in your life when you made a decision based on your feelings.
- How do you respond to the questions, “If it feels so good, how can it be wrong?”

**S4:** Write out a prayer to help you or someone you know walk through a time of destruction and pain. Spend thirty days praying this prayer.

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** Read **Acts 27:13-15 (ESV)** and answer the following:

- Why do you think the sailors could not sail the ship in the right direction?
- Bad decisions become bad directions. Describe a time in your life when you were headed in a bad direction because of a bad decision you had made. How did you change course?

**E2:** Read **Acts 27:16 -17(ESV)** and answer the following:

- Why do you think the sailors did not turn the ship around and run from the storm?
- Why do you think when you are headed the wrong direction that you keep heading in the wrong direction?
- Why do you think it is easier to continue in the right direction rather than try to change directions?

**E3:** Read **Acts 27:18 -22 (ESV)** and answer the following:

- What can you learn from this verse?
- What is the cost of going the wrong direction?
- Describe a time in your life when you were given a second chance. How does that help you to deepen your love of God?

**E4:** After going through this lesson, how can you practically help someone who is going through a storm of destruction or pain?