

Dealing with Pressure

Acts 28:1-10

Verse 3 “but when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out of the heat and fastened to his hand”.

When you are under pressure, have you ever noticed that more things seem to go wrong? It seems like more bills come, more problems arise, more relationships get strained.

When the heat is on, the viper strikes.

Everything in our minds happens at once. Why is this? The enemy knows that when you are down is the best time to put your boot in.

AFL: Lions verses St Kilda. A player by the name of Nick was down and what did the opposition do? They came in and ruffled him up even more. The Enemy knows that if you are weak he will attack you. He doesn't want you to have a successful life.

The viper strikes at that which God wants to use for good.

“The viper struck his hand.” Paul used his hands to make tents to provide for him in the ministry. He also used his hands to lay hands on the sick and see them healed. The enemy will try and stop you from doing that which you are meant to do by attacking that area of your life where God wants to bring about a great victory.

Verse 8 “And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. Paul went in to Him and prayed and laid his hands on him and healed him.” The very area that the enemy wanted to disable was the very area that God wanted to use.

People always talk.

Verse 4 “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.”

Have you ever noticed that when someone begins to speak negative about someone that everyone comes out of the woodwork to criticise? People always talk. You and I can't shut someone up. They will talk. We can't stop them. We can't control others actions. As we accept that we allow God to be our vindication and allow the divine spiritual law of Galatians “what you sow is what you reap.”

Let me encourage you. Let God do the work in their lives, you have something far more important to do when the viper strikes. You don't need to respond to the people. Your responses will not change them. Only the situation, which is ultimately in the hands of God, will change the way people feel, think and talk about you.

Looking at verse six, the people are expecting something to happen. It's almost as if they are willing it to happen. You don't need to concern yourself with the thoughts of others. You don't need to concern yourself with the expectations of others. You have something far more important to do. You have something far more important to do when the viper strikes. AND HE WILL. Don't you worry as sure as the sun rises tomorrow, the viper will strike in a time of pressure. Get ready for God has something for you to do in those situations.

Shake it off and get on with it.

First thing you need to do is to shake it off.

The vines talks about shaking it off or brushing it off. It's almost as if it is of no consequence. When the viper strikes, don't begin by asking questions about why did this happen to me. Otherwise you perpetuate the victim mentality. Just shake it off as is it's of no consequence. It's not going to affect you. Your place of trust is in God.

Second thing to do is to get on with the job of living. What did Paul do when he shook it off? The bible doesn't say what he did straight away but it goes on to tell us he just got on with that which he was called to do.

Too often we look for the problem or the issue and don't get on with the job. With the Cause. The enemy knows that if he can throw a viper at you he may derail the very opportunity to bring about a miracle in your life.

Good things do happen to bad people and bad things do happen to good people. You can't stop that but you can shake them off and get on with that which God has called us to do. The cause of the Kingdom. It's an amazing cause that propels us forward. It has captivated our hearts. It will drive us to do the impossible, the unbelievable, to be involved in some amazing 'coincidences'. The cause of the King.

Shake those things off and step on up.

The story of the donkey in the well and having dirt thrown on him.

Shake it off and step on up.