

# Episode 116

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*But the officer in charge of the prisoners listened more to the ship's captain and the owner than to Paul. And since Fair Havens was an exposed harbour - a poor place to spend the winter - most of the crew wanted to go on to Phoenix, farther up the coast of Crete, and spend the winter there. Phoenix was a good harbour with only a southwest and northwest exposure.*

- Acts 27.11-12

I can remember, as a young Christian, being told that I would be safer in the middle of a war zone in God's will, than crossing the street at home outside of God's will. It terrified me at the time because I had to cross many streets to get home from school and was never sure which one was in God's will! However, to be honest, there is a weighty truth to this idea that is seen clearly in today's chapter of Acts.

When Abraham and Lot parted ways, Abraham allowed his nephew to take the lead in deciding where he would go, while Abraham said he would then go in the opposite direction. Lot saw the green grass and well-watered valleys and so that's the direction he headed, which is why he ended in Sodom and Gomorrah, and we all know how that played out.

More recently, I heard of a man who decided to leave South Africa because of the rampant crime and corruption, taking himself and his young family to Australia where life promised to be far better. It was. However, neither of his children are serving God as a result, since the relocation took them away from friends, family, church, and care, and while heading to higher ground, their faith was left behind. Now he doesn't know how to restore his family back to God.

What makes these circumstances so difficult to navigate, is that on the surface of all three of these occasions, the decisions seemed like the wise thing to do. If you or I were in the same situation, we would make exactly the same decision, and glorify God for his marvelous provision! Except, on each of these occasions, we have to stop and ask 'What has God said about this decision I'm about to make?'

Paul spoke, but the officer in charge listened more to the ship's captain than to Paul. There's no indication of Lot turning to God in his decision-making process as he looked at the land and quickly chose the green pastures. And the family in Australia? The counsel they were given came from Psalm 16 which says "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance." Meaning that there are boundary lines for us, and it's within those boundaries that we enjoy the inheritance God has for us, so it is imperative that we know where those boundaries lie, and we take these big moments to God, to hear his leading and guiding in each and every step. And when we are too subjective to know for sure, we allow friends and leaders to ask those tough, awkward questions now, while we are still in the safety of the harbour, before we boldly wander off into the dark, unsure of whether or not we will find the purposes of God there.

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