

## *Supporting Pastors by Ministering to Christians in Need of Guidance and Deliverance*



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Dear APF Supporter:

### **Greetings!**

We are approaching autumn, my favorite time of year. Since it wasn't a very hot summer, it seems like autumn has already arrived. I hope that all is going well for you as we shift routines from summer to fall.

### **Praises:**

I praise God for the healing work He has been doing. I had the joy this past month to see a number of people set free from the powers of darkness.

Now that the office is done, I can do much more study work and better preparation for ministry sessions. It has been a huge blessing for me.

God is a good and loving God. I praise Him for how He encourages me to continue the battle to live for Him.

### **Something to Consider:**

*Acts 28:1-5—<sup>1</sup>Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. <sup>2</sup>The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. <sup>3</sup>Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. <sup>4</sup>When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." <sup>5</sup>But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. <sup>6</sup>The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.*

The passage above is an amazing story of a miracle. Paul is bitten by a poisonous snake, and yet has no illness from it. The passage Mark 16:18 comes to mind, where Jesus says that believers "will pick up snakes with their hands." However, it is noted that Mark 16:9-20 was not included in the earliest manuscripts of Mark's gospel. Looking beyond the point of a poisonous snake not harming a believer, three things come to mind from Acts 28:1-6.

First, is that of Paul's personal history. The account doesn't say how Paul handled the situation. The accusation of him being a murderer was not too far off. He may not have been the person to do the killing, but at one point in his life he was a leader in the persecution of Christians. Acts 8:1 says ... "And Saul was there, giving approval to his death." He stood in approval of the stoning of Stephen. I wonder how much Paul's past tormented him. He certainly knew the truth that he was forgiven in Christ Jesus. Nonetheless, I wonder if he had moments of deep regret.

In ministry, I have seen how the enemy uses our personal history against us. A paper that I use for learning God's truth compares Satan's lie versus the Truth of God found in the Bible. In this

case, Satan's lie is: "You can't have peace with God. You aren't saved. You're not forgiven. Look at your record!" Indeed our record can be pretty bad. God's Truth, however, is that Jesus' blood applies to my record and washes me clean and I am forgiven (1 John 1:9). Not only that, my guilt is cleansed as well (Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:19-22). Satan may taunt us with our past, but God has delivered us from our past. I believe Paul understood that well, and could live in confidence that he was forgiven.

The second point carries over from last month's newsletter. Sometimes our weaknesses bother us so much we can't forgive ourselves. Because Paul had forgiveness from God, he doesn't seem to be bothered by a need to forgive himself. The fact that the people of Malta called him a murderer did not seem to cause Paul to fall into depression or be embarrassed. In ministry, I've seen how when a person faces the record, the anger toward himself or herself is intense. It can be a struggle to forgive oneself for past actions. I can be very hard on myself for my mistakes. As I remind those who come for ministry, I must remind myself: if a Holy God can forgive me, I surely can forgive myself. Jesus shed His blood for my forgiveness, so accept it!

Third, Paul shows victory in Christ. The snake did not harm him, and then right after that he had a healing session. The "rest of the island came and were cured." Paul did not let his past keep him from doing ministry. Instead, he shared a powerful gospel where the people were healed and drawn to Christ. Acts 28 does not detail who all came to saving faith. Nonetheless, the people honored Paul and his companions with many provisions. Satan and his host like to attack us and get us to feel guilty for our sins. If we have confessed our sins, we can walk in victory and confidence as Paul did.

**Prayer Concerns:**

Please continue to pray for those who are contemplating calling for help. A number of who people have talked to me want help, but need the courage to actually meet.

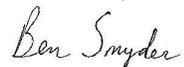
Please pray for the next speaking engagement on September 11 at Bethel Mennonite Church in Nappanee.

Prayer for protection for all believers is necessary. As we head toward the Fall Equinox and Halloween, the powers of darkness are much more active. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to empower believers and Holy Angels alike for the battle.

**Final Thoughts:**

Hebrews 9:14 says that Jesus' blood cleanses our consciences for a reason: so we can serve God! When we feel guilty about what we've done, we lose confidence and the drive to serve God. We can feel worthless. Jesus has addressed the issue on the cross so we can have confidence and serve God well. I encourage you to walk in confidence knowing the victory of Jesus Christ on the cross.

In Christ,



Ben Snyder