**Showed Us Unusual Kindness**

**Introduction:**

Give brief overview of Acts 27. Describe the trip’s purpose, contrary winds, violent storm, Paul’s visit from an angel, shipwreck, arrival safely on land.

**Text:** Acts 28:1-15

**Body:**

1. **Natives Show Paul Kindness** Acts 28:1-7 Verse 1 “Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta.” NKJV Paul and the other two hundred seventy-five men were no doubt exhausted, soaked to the bone, and shivering – but alive! They found out somehow that they were on Malta, a small rock of an island eighteen miles long and eight miles wide just south of Sicily. The name meant “refuge” in the Canaanite language which was aptly named for these men! Verse 2 “And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.” NKJV The natives had spotted these shipwreck victims. It was quite common at that time for islanders to kill victims like these and steal their valuables or make slaves of them. But not these natives. It was late October or early November [more or less 50 degrees] and rain was falling. They made a fire for these cold, shivering strangers and showed “unusual kindness.” This was out-of-the-ordinary kindness, above and beyond usual love of mankind [philanthropy]. They expressed extraordinary hospitality to these strangers. [Think of the last time for you to receive or give such unusual kindness.] Verses 3-6 “But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, ‘No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.’ But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.” NKJV Paul does a good deed himself by gathering wood and tossing it on the fire. He was not the type to sit around and do nothing! A poisonous snake bites him, but there was no effect to him. People can change their minds very quickly. (Mark 16:17-18) “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” NKJV Verse 7 “In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days.” NKJV One reason the natives were so hospitable was because the leading man on the island was hospitable. He had a friendly disposition. Publius, most likely the Roman-appointed governor of Malta, invited Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus into his home. He set the example for the rest of the island. His behavior reminds us of I Timothy 3:2. “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;” Elders are to be hospitable. Elders must lead the way in being hospitable, or the congregation won’t be hospitable either. Elders’ wives play a crucial role.
2. **Paul Shows Natives Kindness** Acts 28:8-10 Verse 8 “And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.” NKJV Paul and the others are being treated very courteously by Publius and entertained in the governor’s residence. Paul learns that Publius’ father is sick with fever and dysentery. Apparently he had “Malta fever”, a disease that could last for two-three years. In 1887 they found it was caused by microorganism in milk of goats on the island. Bracellosis causes fever, weight loss, joint and muscle pain, an enlarged spleen. . . It may even lead to encephalitis. So Paul goes into him, prays to God, lays hand on him, and he is healed. No doubt the house is filled with rejoicing. Verse 9 “So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.” NKJV

The word spread and others who were sick came to Paul and were cured. No doubt Paul healed in the name of Jesus. [Dr. Luke may have also helped medically.] Notice they were on Malta three months, mid-November to mid-February. See Verse 11. Besides healing, Paul almost certainly preached the gospel to them as well.

Verse 10 “They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.” NKJV Paul had found an opportunity to help those who had helped him. He showed kindness. The natives further helped by giving them supplies they needed for the trip to Rome. They were honored in many ways.

1. **Brethren Show Paul Kindness**  Acts 28:11-15 “After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.” NKJV After three months, they continue on their journey to Rome in February. Syracuse is on the island of Sicily. Rhegium is at the tip of Italy. At Puteoli, on the western coast of Italy, there was a congregation of God’s people; a church of Christ was already in that city. These good brethren show kindness to them and invite them to stay for an entire week. Paul was a stranger to them, but one who was in the faith. Note III John 5. “Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers,” NKJV As Paul and the others travelled onto Rome, brethren from there came down to Appii Forums and Three Inns to greet them. Their kindness caused Paul to thank God and be encouraged.
2. **Lessons**
3. Recall Hebrews 13:2a “Do not forget to entertain strangers,” Being hospitable to all, especially strangers, is a vital part of Christianity. (Romans 12:13b) “given to hospitality.” Look for ways to be hospitable, friendly. The attitude with which to display this kindness is also important. “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” (I Peter 4:9)
4. Hospitality is the Greek word for lover of strangers. It is the idea of showing kindness to people who may never have an opportunity to repay. Recall Matthew 25’s description of the great Judgment scene. One characteristic of those who are called “blessed” is following – “. . . I was a stranger and you took Me in.” (Matthew 25:35) NKJV
5. Being hospitable is not only inviting people into our homes, but supplying the needs of those people. “Treat them as guests.” Do what we can personally to help. These may be “little” things – extravagance is not necessary. Example: waiting room; new neighbor One of the most essential ingredients of hospitality is that of sharing yourself – sharing love, kindness, making people feel warm and welcome. May all of us make a more determined effort to show “unusual kindness.”

**Invitation:**

Christians should be the most hospitable people around. How have your efforts been lately? Can we do better?

Bobby Stafford January 1, 2017 Acts: Lesson 57 Acts 28:1-15