

Giving Thanks for Food

Paul in the Storm

Foundation

Bible passage: Acts 27.9-44

We might normally sit around the table for a meal, or perhaps sometimes have a picnic in a park or on the beach. But people do sometimes eat meals in unusual places, like astronauts in space, or climbers on top of a mountain. In this Bible passage Paul was giving thanks to God on a ship, in the middle of a violent storm.

Paul had been arrested for telling people about Jesus and was being taken as a prisoner to Rome. Part of the journey was by ship and Luke, who wrote Acts and was also onboard the ship describes what happens in fascinating detail. They were caught in a violent storm for several days and were fearful of their boat being driven onto rocks. Eventually it got so bad (v20) that people were sure they would die. For days they had been so afraid and busy trying to keep alive that they had not eaten. But Paul was convinced that God would rescue them because through an angel God had told him that he would reach Rome and that the people on the ship would be saved from the storm as well. Eventually they came close to land, but people were still afraid and had still not eaten. So, Paul took food, gave

“he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat”

thanks to God, broke it and ate. Then he encouraged everyone else on board to eat too (276 people in total). Eventually the ship ran aground and was destroyed. But everyone on



board safely reached land and were rescued as God had said would happen.

We need food and water to keep us alive and in the Lord's Prayer we ask God to give us our daily bread. Therefore, people often say a prayer before they eat in which they thank God for the food. This is often referred to as “saying grace” - because the word grace in the Bible means gift (*charis*) and is related to the word thanksgiving (*eucharist*).

Sometimes people sing “grace” before eating. One such thanksgiving was written by Thomas Ken in 1672:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise Him above you heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Booklet:

What did Paul give thanks for? - food

How did he give thanks? - in prayer before he ate

Reflection:

Do you give thanks for food at home or in school or know someone who does this?

What sort of things do you say when you give thanks like this?



Everything we have comes from God and just as we pray for our daily bread so it is good to give thanks before we eat.