

VOYAGER

Experiences That Shape Our Faith

About the Series: Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

Part 20

Dangers of Spiritual Assumptions

Acts 28:1-10 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

DISCUSS

We often make wrong assumptions about God, about other people's relationship with God, and even about how God views us, based on what we see happening in life, and these assumptions can lead to broken relationships. As followers of Jesus, how do we avoid making wrong spiritual assumptions? Acts 28:1-10 gives us three biblical principles to live by.

When something bad happens to someone, don't assume they must have done something wrong (v. 1-4)

- What unfortunate thing happened to Paul at the coast of Malta and what were the assumptions of the locals about him because of what happened?
- What wrong assumptions run through your mind when something bad happens to someone?
- Why should you not assume or judge others just because something bad is happening to them?

- As followers of Christ, what should you do for people who are going through difficult times?

When something good happens to someone, don't assume they must be special (v. 5-6)

- What was the wrong assumption of the locals when Paul didn't suffer from the bite of the poisonous snake?
- Should you just assume that those who are obedient to God are more deserving, more special, or more loved by God? Why or why not? What is the basis of good things happening to you?
- What does the Scripture say is the basis for a God-approved life?
- Whose prayer does James 5:16 refer to as powerful and effective?

Do not assume adversities indicate God isn't powerfully at work and bringing about his intended purpose (v. 7-10)

- What miraculous things happened through Paul on the island?
- Why was it evident that the power of the Living God was very much alive and at work to bring about His intended purpose?
- Share an experience that in spite of challenges and adversities, God was evidently at work and powerful enough to handle your problems.
- Would you be okay with a figurative snakebite in your life? If you were at the beach when Paul was bitten, would you be able to comment, "This can turn out to be a good thing"?

REFLECT

Would you be okay with experiencing the adversities that come suddenly and unexpectedly, knowing that God will use it to bring about His intended purpose and for His ultimate glory?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, it is so easy to make assumptions about someone, or about me, and even about You based on what I see and experience without knowing all the facts, which cause me to think ill of others, sever a relationship, or become bitter and angry at You. Lord, please give me wisdom and discernment so that I don't make spiritual assumptions unwisely. May You give me a good understanding of Your Word that reveals about how You operate and work. In Jesus' precious name. Amen.