

St. Mary's Article

Acts 25:1-22

New living translation

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In Romans chapter 8 verse 28 Paul makes an emphatic and sweeping statement. He writes, "All things work together for good for those who love the Lord." Sometimes, when we are going through a time of crisis, it can be incredibly difficult to comprehend how this might be possible. Often, it is only as we look back that we see how God has been at work.

I'm convinced that this must have been the case for Paul as he experienced the circumstances that we read about in Acts 25. He must have been incredibly frustrated that, for well over two years, he was stuck in prison, apparently unable to fulfil his ministry. However, as we look back now, we can see, without a doubt, that God was at work.

In the short term he got to speak to king Agrippa. In the medium term he got sent to Rome, fulfilling a word that God has spoken directly to him, that he would testify for him there. And, in the long term, we know that Paul wrote a lot of his letters from prison. These letters were, in no doubt, a blessing to the churches that received them, and 2000 years later are still a source of encouragement to us today, especially for those who have also had to face false imprisonment, accusations, and criticism. I suspect that Paul would have been astonished, amid all these difficulties, to know how much good was going to come from them.

Already, in the current pandemic, we are seeing that good is coming from it. Many Christians are spending much more time in prayer and there has been a huge surge in those looking towards the church for help and answers. How will this situation pan out in the medium and long term? Only time will tell. In this life, we may never know how God uses our faithfulness in the face of the challenges we all face. All we are called to do is trust that God will fulfil his word, for His glory.