SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of October 25, 2026 ***Acts 27:27-44***

"When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. 28 So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. 29 And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. 33 As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." 35 And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. 36 Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. 39 Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. 40 So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. 41 But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. 42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. 43 But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, 44 and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

1. In our passage this week, Paul and 275 others are hopeless and helpless before a monstrous ocean storm that has hammered their ship for two straight weeks. If you were in Paul's shoes, describe the firmness of your faith in the midst of such threats. What do you think kept Paul so confident? (see Acts 23:11)

2. When the Lord speaks we, like Paul, can have absolute confidence that His word shall not return empty but will accomplish that for which it was sent (Isa 55:11). What promises in God's Word can you stake your life upon? The deeper question is, do you? Explain.

3. When Paul discovers the sailors' treachery to abandon the ship, he takes immediate action to prevent this from happening. Do you think Paul, a prisoner on the ship, was stepping out of his lane, being too presumptious? After all, if the Lord promised Paul he would testify about Jesus in Rome, shouldn't Paul have simply "let go, and let God"? Why do you think Paul didn't just fall asleep in the stern of the ship and wait for God to save them?

4. In what areas of your own life - in your relationships with God, your wife, your children, your parents - do you need to take definitive action in order to obey the Word of God? In other words, where in your life do you have good intentions, but not-so-good follow through?

5. In spite of the seemingly hopeless situation, Paul encourages everyone on board to eat and gain their strength, then reassures them that God will save them. He then prays before the entire ship, giving thanks to God, and everyone is encouraged. What was it about Paul (whom tradition tells us was a bald, bow legged, weak-eyed short man) that could give soldiers, seasoned sailors, rough fishermen, and even hardened prisoners such hope?

6. When people around you find out that you are a Christian, what impression do they come away with about your God? Put another way, what kind of God does a watching world see, when they witness your life?

7. One may come away from this week's passage feeling convicted to speak up, do more, and be a better witness for Christ. If so, we may be missing the point. Paul's heroic actions were not what made him great. Paul knew that it was in his weakness that he was strong. Paul's strength came from obedience grounded in an absolute faith and trust in his Lord. In your own life, how are you trying to be strong, trusting in your own strength? Where do you need to let go of yourself, so that you can grab ahold of God with both hands and put your full trust in Him alone?