

Sermon Title: "Don't Mismanage Your Storm"

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Acts 27:29, 33-44

29 At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight. 33 Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said. 34 "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish." 35 Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. 36 Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat— 37 all 276 of us who were on board. 38 After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard. 39 When morning dawned, they didn't recognize the coastline, but they saw a bay with a beach and wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground. 40 So they cut off the anchors and left them in the sea. Then they lowered the rudders, raised the foresail, and headed toward shore. 41 But they hit a shoal and ran the ship aground too soon. The bow of the ship stuck fast, while the stern was repeatedly smashed by the force of the waves and began to break apart. 42 The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to make sure they didn't swim ashore and escape. 43 But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan. Then he ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. 44 The others held on to planks or debris from the broken ship.^[9] So everyone escaped safely to shore.

Sermon Summary:

Paul was caught up in his own storm even before the natural storm on the sea. Paul attempted to guide the captain and officer over the prisoners safely through the storm, but they declined to listen.

We all endure various storms in life that have almost left us debilitated. These storms are never convenient, so we must ask, what is the assignment of these storms? They do not come to take us out, but to expose areas in which we must grow: we must learn how to manage our storms. We should avoid coming through our storms the same way we enter them. Paul shows us three ways to manage ourselves as we go through the storms in life.

1. Remain prayerful - Paul shows us the importance of prayer during fear and distress. Don't allow fear to dictate your actions. We can choose to face the storm head on with prayer- be clear in purpose. The prisoners asked God for daylight. They understood that if they could just see through the storm, then they could withstand it. Ask God to help you see your way through your storms so that you will know what to do, how to manage the situation.

2. Regain your strength- After they had fasted for 14 days, Paul knew they would need their physical strength and proceeded to feed the prisoners. Paul prayed and glorified God and broke bread with them. They not only refueled their physical bodies, but also their spiritual strength that would give them encouragement to continue on. We must thank God in spite of our circumstances and acknowledge He is the provider of our provisions and strength.

3. Remember to use your resources - The ship hits a reef and begins to break into pieces. God gave Paul favor with the centurion, and he protected Paul and the other prisoners from being killed. He instructed the prisoners to do what they could to safely get to shore. Some could swim; others used planks of the broken ship. Being prayerful and regaining your strength allows you to make it through the storm. The prisoners could encourage one another to hold on to what they could. Ultimately, the prisoners were the resources everyone needed to survive the storm because God uses the “least of these” to bring salvation to many. The text teaches us to help one another because all of us are in various stages of managing storms, yet we’re in the same boat of life. We should be resources for each other in times of need.

There are storm survivors and soon to be survivors, be confident you will make it to shore. There is purpose in life’s storms. God knows all and sees everything that goes on in our lives. He has all power to reverse or stop what tries to take us out. Declare God’s safety over your life. No matter what attacks come our way, we are safe in the arms of the almighty God.

Reflective Questions:

1. Have you ever faced storms (childhood trauma, a deteriorating marriage, etc.) around you and within you? What could you have done differently to manage those storms?
2. What can you do even now to better manage the wounds or remnants of storms that are still affecting your life?
3. Do you believe fasting still has relevance and power in managing life’s storms? Explain. How do you think this benefitted the prisoners when they were trying to survive the storm?
4. Think about a storm you survived. What did you learn and how did you benefit from it?
5. What are some practical steps you can take to keep fear from directing your actions during stressful situations?
6. What resources do we have to use when going through a storm?