THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 24TH–25TH // THE BOOK OF ACTS

PRAYING FOR DAYLIGHT (ACTS 27:27–32)

APPROACHING LAND (VS. 27–28)

Adrift in the middle of the night, something about the surroundings alerts the sailors that they are approaching land. Soundings confirm that they are approaching rapidly.

- Although Paul mentioned previously that they would have to "run aground on some island" (v. 26), the prospect of doing so in the dark is something these sailors fear.

PRAYING TO WHOM? (V. 29)

Fearing the likelihood of hitting rocks before land, the sailors do one last thing to help the situation (drop anchors) and then pray for daylight. But these guys don't know the Lord.

- "There are no atheists in foxholes." Often, we wait until situations are at their bleakest and all options in our control are exhausted before we turn to God.

WORLDLY VS. GODLY WISDOM (VS. 30–32)

A few other sailors selfishly attempt to escape through deceit. Paul sees through it and warns Julius, and he has his soldiers cut the skiff free.

- Worldly wisdom told these sailors to run for it while they could and that not everyone could be saved but they could save themselves.
- God's wisdom would say, through Paul, that there is a way for everyone if you trust Him.

"Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." Paul knew that every experienced hand would be needed for what was to come. Notice that this is a condition of the promise the angel gave to Paul in v. 24.

- The promise that they would live required them to believe and operate as though the promise were true.

The sailors have frantic reactions to approaching land in the dark. Some make preparations and then seek divine favor from their gods. Some try to escape. Paul is calm. He believes God. Julius believes him.

- He is displaying the fruit of the Spirit, specifically peace and self-control. This begins inspiring others in the storm.

ALMOST DAYLIGHT (ACTS 27:33–38)

FOURTEEN DAYS

Paul senses that just before daybreak is the time to encourage and strengthen these men. The time for action is near.

- Going 14 days without food was likely not a result of religious fasting but rather seasickness and despair.
- God's timing is perfect. These hearts are primed for Paul's words and example.

"THIS IS FOR YOUR SURVIVAL..." (V. 34)

Paul offers a bit of common sense ("take some food") and a bold declaration ("since none of you will lose a hair from your head"). They will be saved from the shipwreck, but they have a part to play—to eat to be strengthened.

- "A word spoken at the right time is like gold apples in silver settings" (Proverbs 25:11).

"HE GAVE THANKS TO GOD..." (VS. 35–36)

Paul follows his own advice and takes food himself, but not before thanking God "in the presence of all of them." Luke notes that, after this, everyone else is encouraged and eats as well. Paul thanks God in the midst of the storm.

- Our example can mean the difference between despair and hope/courage.

"THERE WERE 276 OF US..." (V. 37)

It seems Luke and Aristarchus help feed everyone because for the first time Luke gives us the number of people on board: 276. And Luke uses a peculiar word: "us." It seems this moment unites everyone.

- When we show the love of Christ to those who don't know Him, God's message for them through us holds weight.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE (V. 38)

After they eat, they seem to move with renewed purpose and commitment to face what is to come—they lighten the ship by throwing the last cargo overboard, their grain. They now face running the ship aground and need all the buoyancy they can get.

- This is an all-in move. They are beginning to believe God's promise.

DAYLIGHT COMES (ACTS 27:39–44)

KNOWN VS. UNKNOWN (VS. 39–40)

With daylight comes clarity about the situation. The outlook remains bleak but known.

- Although they don't recognize the island, they identify what they should head towards, make a plan, and execute it.
- The plan confirms what God spoke through Paul the day before: "But we have to run aground on some island" (v. 26).

Encouraged by Paul's influence, strengthened by food, and now with a clear picture of their circumstances, the sailors are able to face the situation and move with purpose.

- The unknown fuels fear. But "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment" (2 Timothy 1:7).

SLIGHT CHANGE (?) OF PLANS (V. 41)

They still run aground but on a sandbar some distance from the beach. The great theologian Mike Tyson once said, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

- Our plans should be based on God's leading, and we need to lean on Him for resiliency when the unexpected happens.

ANOTHER CHANGE (?) OF PLANS (VS. 42–43)

Since the ship didn't make it to the beach, there was now an opportunity for escape.

- The consequences of a soldier letting a prisoner escape were the same as the intended fate of the prisoner. With 276 people on board, and most of them prisoners, many were likely destined for the Coliseum or some other form of certain death.

That is not something these soldiers want. However, Julius has grown to regard Paul with respect and trust and doesn't want him killed, so he stops the plan.

- Our care for others, whether different from us or not, will cause them to care for us. We must take the initiative, be vulnerable, and show that love and care first.

"IN THIS WAY..." (V. 44)

Some can swim, but many rely on debris from the ship. God provides a way to give everyone's life to Paul—despite all the different forces working against it (chaotic storm, selfish hearts)—because He is sovereign.

- His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).

GOD IS IN CONTROL

- God is sovereign, invites us to be a part of His plan, and gives us responsibilities ("unless these men stay" and "this is for your survival").
- What God says will happen, happens. Our involvement only changes how we experience it.
- Do we trust God with the details, or do we take the *hows* and *whats* into our own hands and work against God while claiming to follow Him?
- If we do trust God with the details, our experience of His work in us and through us and for us will be joyful, even when it is painful or difficult.

WHAT IF THE STORM ISN'T ABOUT YOU?

- Life will have storms. Sometimes, God causes a storm to get our attention (Jonah).
- **Often, the storm is about the people going through the storm with us and the One bringing us through the storm.**
- **The love of Christ and the care that we show others will play a role in God's plan.**
- During these storms, it will be the **fruit we display** and **our belief in God's promises** that will **glorify Him**.
- **We can do nothing apart from Jesus** (John 15:5), so to produce fruit, we must be **in the Bible, in prayer, and in community with other Believers.**
- When we commit ourselves to God, He will produce His fruit in us—not primarily for us, but for others.
- Like Paul, we can inspire peace when we have peace, and people can be encouraged when we have courage. But these things are not generated by us. The Holy Spirit generates them, but we display them.
- "Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through **prayer and petition with thanksgiving,** present your requests to God. And the **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6–7).

WORLDLY WISDOM VS. GODLY WISDOM

- The unexpected will happen, but God knows what's going to happen. We only have a partial picture. Are we willing to adapt and let go of the way we thought things should be?
- He gets the glory for bringing us through the unexpected. Will we trust Him to fill in the blanks as we go?