THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 25TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

ADRIFT (ACTS 27:27–38)

THE SETTING

The sailors realize they're in trouble when the sea is getting shallower (i.e., the coast is getting closer). Without moon or stars (v. 20), the night was likely pitch black and there was no way of navigating.

- This is about as out-of-control as you can be. **Who you think God is will come out most at these times.**

HUMAN ATTEMPTS AT SAVING

Some soldiers, having heard God's promise of safety (vs. 21–26), show a lack of faith by trying to save themselves. They think they have a better plan than what they've heard.

- All such attempts at saving ourselves are doomed to fail. **Our lives must operate by faith in God's promises, not merely our works.**

"YOU CANNOT BE SAVED"

It's a very specific phrase Paul uses. The last time we heard this was in 15:1 from false teachers: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom prescribed by Moses, **you cannot be saved."**

- Whereas the false teachers said you cannot be saved without works, Paul says **you cannot be saved without faith.**

"HAVING EATEN NOTHING"

In the next scene (vs. 33–38), we see the provision for the sailors' need to eat. They've been saving all their remaining food, waiting until they absolutely need it. The wreck is imminent, and the time is now.

- We may experience need for a long time before provision, but **God will give us what we need exactly when we need it.**

"A HAIR FROM YOUR HEAD"

Luke, the author of Acts, also wrote the Gospel of Luke. He almost certainly has in mind Jesus' same teaching to be faithful persecuted witnesses from Luke 21.

- "They will lay their hands on you and persecute you...They will kill some of you...but **not a hair of your head will be lost.** By your endurance, gain your lives."

THE FEEDING OF THE 276

Another probable allusion to Luke's Gospel is Paul imitating Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9:12–17). There are differences, but the similarities are striking and likely intentional.

- Paul is imitating Christ (being a little Christ, i.e., a Christian) and displaying faith in God's imminent salvation. We ought to be **wise** and **faithful** also.

ASHORE (ACTS 27:39–44)

SHIPWRECK

Much like they went two weeks without food, we see another dire physical trial before God delivers them safely.

- Not only do we need to trust in God's total control during "ordinary" periods of need, but during extraordinary difficulty and fear as well. **The faith we build in one is how we will respond in the other.**

"THE SOLDIERS' PLAN WAS TO KILL"

The soldiers know what happens to guards who let prisoners escape (Acts 12 and 16). So once again, doubting God's promise, they attempt to save themselves. But **their plan wrecks when it collides with God's plan.**

- You can try to fight God's plan, but it is both the immovable object and unstoppable force.

BUT JULIUS KEPT THEM FROM THEIR PLAN

One of the main themes of Acts is the Jews' rejection of God and the Gentiles' unexpected faith. Here again, God's plan is kept and advanced by an unlikely Gentile, Julius the centurion.

- Oftentimes, "the right people" do what's wrong and "the wrong people" do what's right. **God sees the heart, not the pedigree.**

"EVERYONE SAFELY REACHED THE SHORE"

Paul said earlier that "unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." Now we see the fulfillment of that promise: everyone stayed in the ship, and everyone was saved.

- Being saved wasn't a red carpet experience. It was weeks without food, shipwreck, and swimming for safety. **But none lost even a hair from their head.**

HE PROTECTS US FROM DISOBEDIENCE

- You never have to sin. There is always a way of escape from temptation.
- Sometimes, in our weakness, God removes the opportunity to sin (cuts the ropes to the skiff).
- Most often, He provides ordinary means like community, confession, and wisdom.

HE PROTECTS US FROM NEED

- We must understand "need" vs. "want." The sailors went 14 days without food before they ate.
- When we truly understand our needs, we'll find that He provides over and above our needs.

HE PROTECTS OUR LIVES

- Because we sin by nature and choice, we all must die.
- But **no one** (like assassins in ambush) and **nothing** (like a violent storm) can take your life **a moment** before God's time for you.
- Without the will of your Father in Heaven, not a hair can fall from your head.

BUT WHY?

- God protected Paul so he could testify in Rome and be killed.
- God protects us so we can make Him known.
- "Therefore by His Holy Spirit, He assures me of eternal life, and makes me **joyfully willing and ready to live for Him"** (Heidelberg Catechism).