

## "Lessons from the Storm" Acts 27

### INTRO TO READINGS

Our reading is from Acts 27 – the story of a storm and shipwreck.

Sailing in those times was a **dangerous business**.

In his letter to the Corinthians Paul tells us he was **shipwrecked 3 times**.

But that was before this one...

The first part of the chapter sets the scene:

Paul was **framed by the jealous Jewish authorities** in Jerusalem and used his right as a Roman citizen to **appeal to Caesar**.

This meant he had to be **escorted by Roman Guard** to Rome.

They're sailing in a **time of year considered very very dangerous**.

From **mid Sept** sailing conditions were doubtful, after **mid Oct suicidal**.

They already had the Day of Atonement (late Sep) so this is very late.

Paul, prompted by experience and the Holy Spirit, warns them not to sail.

But the Centurion is **persuaded** by the ship-owner and pilot.

The harbour they're in was **not very comfortable** for wintering.

And so the **majority vote** is to sail to the next harbour...

For a while things look good, they start with a favourable wind.

But soon this is replaced by a brute they called the NorthEaster.

And they're in the teeth of a gale.

By day three of the storm they have:

- Hoisted the **life boats**
- **Passed ropes** under the ship to hold the hull together
- Thrown the **ship's tackle** (spare masts and sails) overboard.

The storm lasts for 14 days. *When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.*

In the midst of this Paul (remember he's a prisoner) has gained enough influence that he is able to tell everyone that the Lord had appeared to him in a vision promising that they will be saved, but the ship will run aground on an island!

And so, on day 14 the sailors sense land is nearby but it's dark.

So they anchor the ship – like a stone in a catapult and wait for dawn.

This is where our reading picks up...

## READING: ACTS 27:27-44

On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on board. When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

## SERMON

### Intro

I think like the sailors, we're at this tough place where we'd hoped we might get through easily. But the gentle breeze is being replaced by the hurricane.

This week:

- A number of you let me know you'd reached 1 degree of separation
- You've been to the malls and seen the number of closed shops
- You've taken a salary knock
- You've heard that our local hospitals have got full overnight.

The storm is here...

We're going to look at the nature of storms, **how we conduct ourselves**, what God does.

### The Nature of Storms

- This was a seasonal storm.  
Corona is a novel virus – but storms are a given.  
They will come.
- Even the experts can make mistakes
- Majority votes aren't always better
- Our desire for comfort can trip us up
- They start quietly and fool us

- They are a war of attrition
- They disorientate us
- People will act out of self-interest and be willing to make sacrifices

## **Paul's Leadership**

- Listens to God
- Earns the right to speak
- Didn't have authority, but influence
- Encourages
- Gives decisive leadership
- Leads them through the Breaking of Bread. - Points to Jesus

## **God**

- Doesn't always perform miracles or prevent loss.
- Raises leaders
- Uses people who work together
- Transforms the situation.