

# WE ARE SENT

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

## Growth Group Curriculum Week 9 – November 7, 2021 – Acts 27:33-44

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

We are drawing close to the end of the book of Acts and we see Paul making his final journey – he will finally make it to Rome. He had written a letter to the church at Rome previously, but he had never visited the city. Rome was key. It was the largest city and if it could be evangelized Paul felt that the gospel would truly go to the ends of the earth.

After spending a couple of years in prison in Caesarea, Paul finally appeals his case to Rome. He gets onboard a ship and soon there are major weather concerns. This is not the first time this had happened to Paul. 2 Corinthians 11:25 tells us that Paul had been shipwrecked three other times.

Throughout Acts 27 the apostle Paul offers his counsel about sailing and not sailing. He is the reason many lives are spared when the soldiers sought to kill all the prisoners who were on board.

The line in Acts 27:20 sums up well what people on the boat must have been feeling. *“When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.”* Things were bleak. The storm continued to get worse and worse and finally all hope was lost. There was no chance of being saved.

Yet, God had a different plan. Everyone would be saved. Everyone would live. But first they had to eat and gain the strength they had lost over the past couple of weeks. They were seasick. They were tired. They were weary. In that setting Paul takes some bread and gives thanks to God. Though this is not the Lord’s Supper, it is a good reminder that God was with them and as Paul said not one of them would lose a single hair from his head.

They do get off the ship and wash up on the island of Malta where the people there show them incredible hospitality and unusual kindness.



## Exploring the Text

Acts 27:33-44

<sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> 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.” <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. <sup>37</sup> Altogether there were 276 of us on board. <sup>38</sup> When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

<sup>39</sup> When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. <sup>40</sup> Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. <sup>41</sup> But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

<sup>42</sup> The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. <sup>43</sup> But the centurion wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. <sup>44</sup> The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

- 1) Have you ever been in a boat or on a plane and encountered a major storm? How did you respond?
- 2) On a number of occasions in Acts 27 the centurion listened to Paul. Why did the centurion listen to Paul? What was it about Paul’s confidence, vision (vv. 22-26) and prophecy (v. 31) that impacted the centurion?
- 3) Amid all the chaos, Paul gives thanks to God for the food, then serves a sort of “crisis communion.” What was the result, and why? Talk about a time when a communion service gave you peace in the middle of personal storm.
- 4) Share about a time when you chose to go in a particular direction, or took a certain job, and after a while you realized you had not made the right decision.
- 5) In the sermon, Pastor Paul referenced Mark 4:35-41, where Jesus seemingly leads the disciples into and through a storm in order to teach them a lesson about faith. Do you feel as though God has ever led you into and out of a difficult situation in order to teach you a lesson?
- 6) Has there been a time in your life when you felt like all hope was lost? How did you get through? What did you learn?



- 7) Jehovah Jireh means “the Lord will provide,” or “the Lord will see to it.” We first hear this name for God in the story of Abraham. Share about a time in your life when you felt as though God provided a way or an answer, or a time when you felt that God saw you and heard you and provided.
- 8) Is there a storm (big or small) that you are currently facing in your life? It may not be a major storm, but where in your life would you like people in your growth group to be praying for you.

