

Survival Skills For Storms. Acts 27

In Acts 27 Paul sails for Rome as a prisoner with 276 other people on the ship on the edge of winter – a very unusual time to set out. The voyage was fraught with storms and setbacks from the start. They were in a hurricane for two weeks! Their vessel was a far cry from the sturdy boats of today that are heavily armed with navigation technology and safety devices.



In Paul's account of the trip, he tells how they made slow headway for many days. They were at the mercy of the wind, which often altered their course and the way they handled the ship. Off the shore of Crete the storm became so violent, Paul says "When the ship was caught and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive" (verse 15). They took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began throwing the cargo overboard. (verse 18)

But by the fourteenth night, Paul tells us in verse 27, they were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea. By now, the sailors had given up hope. Fearing they were being driven into the shallows and the rocks, they dropped all four anchors and prayed for morning. (verse 29)

Except for boating and sailing enthusiasts, few people today have ever come close to experiencing a real shipwreck. Yet, often the events of our modern lives emulate this same kind of upset and destruction. Sometimes, the pressure and stress from things we cannot control feel like giant waves crashing over us. Our lives appear to be as close to shipwreck as what Paul describes. Paul is clearly in the center of God's will for his life, but why is he having such great difficulty? Does this describe your life right now?

Survival Skills For Storms

1. 1. Go with the storm.

Storms usually change your plans – and that can be a good thing. Storms mean you have no control. God puts us through storms because He loves us. They blow us back into His arms! They teach and remind us of His power over circumstances. In verse 17, the word "ropes" has the same meaning as the Greek verb "to hold in grace". During the storm, we are held in God's grace.

2. 2. Get rid of cargo you don't need. (verses 18-19)
) Storms may mean you have things in your life that you don't need....or maybe shouldn't be there anyway. What should go? Anything that hinders. Put out the garbage. It may be your language, your peers, how you spend your time, how you regard God's role in your life. What weighs you down?
3. 3. Get busy with things that really matter – people.
In verses 21 and 22 Paul gathers the sailors around him and encourages them. He assures them that even though the ship may be destroyed they will not perish. Focus on the people in your life. If they are "okay" everything else is just "stuff".
4. 4. Get back to God.
In the midst of the roaring wind, the driving rain and the crashing waves, God speaks to Paul through an angel (verse 23). Paul says, "For I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me" (verse 25). Get closer to God during the crisis. Stop and look for Him in the storm. Let Him speak to you through others.
5. 5. Do things that make you strong.
Spend time with God – that's not negotiable. In verse 29, we see they cut their temporary lifelines, and prayed. You must focus on the Saviour. Eat, rest and fellowship. Build your total strength – body, mind and spirit. Paul gathered everyone together and broke bread, encouraging them to eat as much as they wanted.
6. 6. Cut the anchors that are holding you back.
Fearing they would be dashed on the rocks, the sailors dropped all their anchors and tried to wrap the ship with the ropes. Some even dropped lifeboats, thinking they could escape unnoticed. Paul tells the soldiers who were on board that unless everyone stays with the ship, they cannot be saved, and the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboats. If you are in a holding pattern that is not consistent with God's will, you have to sever the things that keep you from moving ahead. Don't count on a lifeboat; count on God.

At the end of the chapter, Paul and everyone on the ship "reached the land in safety" in spite of the ship being completely destroyed. They had never been out of control...they were right on course.