

LIFE GROUP LESSON

When God Moves • Week of July 16

Introduction

Sometimes there is no way around the storms of life. But we serve a Savior who shows up in the middle of the bleakest storms. Perhaps you have been there – things are going along well, then out of nowhere, a gale of typhoon strength threatens to overtake you and all the people around you. What’s up with this? *Why*, we often wonder, is the Lord allowing this to happen? Where is He? Does the Lord not see; does He not care? We live in a fallen, broken world. Sin has indeed wreaked havoc in human existence. But God knows. He sees. And He promises to make a way through if we believe Him and trust Him. The question is: Is your anchor in Christ alone, your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?... or, is your anchor in a ship that’s going down?

Background

In our reading, we step into the scene where the apostle Paul as a prisoner, is onboard a ship headed for Italy (Acts 27:1-6). Because he had appealed to Caesar as he stood before Festus, King Agrippa and the Jewish leaders (see Acts 26:19-32), Paul is en route to Rome, destined for a Holy Spirit assignment (Acts 23:11). Yet, what happens? This second ship Paul boards heads straight into a storm. Because Paul is a prisoner, the captain and owner of the ship disregard Paul’s advice to not go on; because they have an agenda to keep, they attempt to go on ‘farther up the coast of Crete’ and spend the winter there. But things don’t always go as planned. Same with us. We make our plans, but God may have other plans.

Read Acts 27:7-20

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Sometimes when God moves, we must give up our agenda and surrender to the gale of God’s movement. Notice in vv18-19 as the gale-force winds continue to batter the ship, the crew begins throwing the cargo and some of the ship’s gear overboard. What do you need to throw overboard? ... Reliance upon yourself, worldly advice, pride, sarcasm, foul language, or a condescending attitude? What is the Lord speaking to your heart? Even if it was not your idea to venture in the direction you are headed, like the apostle Paul, will you keep a good attitude and handle the circumstance with discretion. Paul speaks the truth and

says: “But take courage! None of you will lose your lives...” and then Paul shares with all onboard what the Lord had revealed to him. Paul is a witness for Christ when all hope is gone!

Read Acts 27:21-44

2. Our Plain Truth states that *God brings hope out of hopelessness and new life out of shipwrecks*. What are you going to do about what the Holy Spirit is saying to you?

Are you or a loved one in a seemingly hopeless situation? Take a moment and lift that individual and their need **up** in prayer to God. Life comes when we look up to the Lord! Too often our countenance is down and our outlook dismal because we are looking to this world for answers. Man’s advice is often flawed. It is only when we seek God’s wisdom that we find life and hope in the midst of darkness. Can you imagine no sun or stars for fourteen days? Sometimes the Lord allows those He loves to experience deep darkness so they learn to put their anchor in Christ alone. Don’t allow yourself to remain anchored to anything that is going down. Cut away the weights of sin and anger, hatred and bitterness; not your spouse or family.

3. How can we help you? How can we encourage one another to seek God’s wisdom and courageously trust the Lord in the middle of the storm?

As you seek counsel, remember that God’s wisdom will never contradict God’s Word. And God’s Word may convict you of sin; but the Lord points out areas to surrender or cut ties, so that we can receive grace and move into a healthier place (see Hebrews 4:14-16). Things may get worse before they get better. But He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. The writer of the book of Hebrews says:

“Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner

sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:16-20).

When God moves, trust Him. We actually dishonor the Lord when we worry and obsess over the wrong things. It’s hard. But when we call out to Him and openly declare our faith, even if we don’t feel like it, God shows up.

Close by declaring these verses from Psalm 18 together! —

*“I love you, LORD; you are my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my Savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety. I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my enemies. The ropes of death entangled me; floods of destruction swept over me; death laid a trap in my path. But in my distress I cried out to the LORD; yes, I prayed to my God for help. He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry to him reached his ears. Then the earth quaked and trembled. The foundations of the mountains shook; they quaked because of his anger. Smoke poured from his nostrils; fierce flames leaped from his mouth. Glowing coals blazed forth from him. He opened the heavens and came down; dark storm clouds were beneath his feet... The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded amid the hail and burning coals... He led me to a place of safety; he rescued me because he delights in me”
(Psalm 18:1-9, 13, 19).*

One Year Bible Reading

July 16:1 Chronicles 22:1-23:32, Romans 3:9-31, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 19:13-14
July 17: 1 Chronicles 24:1-26:11, Romans 4:1-12, Psalm 13:1-6, Proverbs 19:15-16
July 18: 1 Chronicles 26:12-27:34, Romans 4:13-5:5, Psalm 14:1-7, Proverbs 19:17
July 19: 1 Chronicles 28:1-29:30, Romans 5:6-21, Psalm 15:1-5, Proverbs 19:18-19
July 20: 2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17, Romans 6:1-23, Psalm 16:1-11, Proverbs 19:20-21
July 21: 2 Chronicles 4:1-6:11, Romans 7:1-13, Psalm 17:1-15, Proverbs 19:22-23
July 22: 2 Chronicles 6:12-8:10, Romans 7:14-8:8, Psalm 18:1-15, Prov. 19:24-25

when **GOD** *moves*

Text: Acts 27:1-44

PLAIN TRUTH

**God brings _____ out of _____
and new life out of _____.**

- 1. We must seek God’s _____ then courageously _____ God.**
- 2. Through _____ we work on what we _____ control and _____ God for what we _____ control.**
- 3. When storms come stay _____ on _____ and your _____.**
- 4. Develop your _____ before the storm or you may be _____ before the storm.**

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