

Security In the Storm of Chaos

FCC Life Group Discussion Notes

"We Stand Firm" Series Extra

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Opening Prayer

- Pray for God's wisdom in the midst of crisis or difficulty.
- Pray for the faith to remain obedient to God's call when crisis comes.

Ice Breaker

Think of the worst vacation or travel experience you ever had. What made it difficult? Did you make it to your destination? How did you handle the various forms of crisis when they came? Would you take this kind of trip ever again?

Key Scripture

Acts 27:31–38 - *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away. 33 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. 34 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." 35 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. 36 They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38 When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

Sermon Summary

As the Apostle Paul travels to Rome to give his final testimony about Jesus, he faces the chaos of a storm that rips his very mode of transportation right out from under his feet. The instruction given by the Lord to "stay with the ship" is counterintuitive because it goes against the rational thoughts of any sensible person who wants to save themselves. Sometimes in our faith journey, we face various forms of chaos. The world and its values tell us to "look out for #1" and "save yourself," but trusting in Christ offers us a different approach that might seem ridiculous at the time but ultimately leads us to His safe haven.

Discussion Point 1: Genuine Faith Requires Radical Obedience

Scripture: *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Acts 27:31 - Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."

Matthew 16:25 - For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

Suggested points for prayer is given in each prayer section and are up to the discretion of the leader.

Hebrews 11:1–2 (NIV) - Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

Point Summary: The Apostle Paul makes it painfully clear to everyone on the ship that they are required to remain onboard the ship despite the storm in order to be saved. Some men even attempt to escape via the lifeboat, which Paul instructs to be cut loose. Our faith in Christ and His Kingdom is NOT a faith in what we see or experience. Our faith is based in His past work on the cross, His present work within us through His Holy Spirit, and His future Kingdom that will last forever. In John 14:15, Jesus says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Sometimes faith requires obedience that goes completely against the values presented by this world and even “common sense” (according to a worldly definition), but the Lord makes it clear that one of the primary characteristics of being a follower of Jesus is OBEYING HIM, especially when it seems difficult to do so.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some instructions from Jesus that you or others might find difficult to follow (e.g. “love your neighbor,” “forgive as you are forgiven”)?
2. What makes it difficult in this life to follow God’s will at times?
3. What are some of the attitudes from the world and our society that contradict the commands of Christ?

Discussion Point 2: His Promises Give Us Peace in the Storm

Scripture: *Ask a group member to read aloud.*

Acts 27:35 - 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.

Luke 22:19 - And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

John 16:33 - “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Point Summary: In the middle of this stormy chaos, Paul takes a moment to encourage those around him, not just with a reminder to eat something but with a visual illustration of God’s grace through communion. We take communion every Lord’s Day, not just to remember that Jesus died and rose in the past, but to acknowledge His nearness and activity in the present, and to experience joy at the hope of His future Kingdom. It is through His sacrifice and victory over death that we have hope and peace in this life, no matter the storms we face!

Discussion Questions:

1. How can earthly chaos cause us to lose sight of Christ's power and authority?
2. What are some things that we can do in the midst of our "storms" to remind ourselves and others of Christ's power, presence, and plan?

Wrap-Up

2 Corinthians 5:7 - We live by faith, not by sight. We live in a society that promotes anxious distress through its focus on cultural chaos. Just watch any news footage and you will see! This world also promotes self-preservation above self-sacrifice. The good news is that we who function as Kingdom citizens do not have to surrender to the fears or selfishness of this age. Instead, we can have stable footing and can offer unshakable hope in the midst of the chaos through the authority of Christ. While trusting and obeying Him is not always easy, it is the only way to salvation.

Challenge

This week, look for opportunities to trust Christ in spite of difficult circumstances. Take a self-inventory and find the areas of your life that are not yet fully surrendered to Christ's authority. Look for specific parts of your daily functioning in which you struggle with faith and obedience, and then systematically surrender each of them to the Lord in prayer.

Closing Prayer

- Express gratitude to God for His power, presence, and provision in the middle of difficult moments.
- Ask God to reveal to you specific areas where you can trust Him more.
- Ask God to strengthen your faith, especially when things get rough.