

Sermon Discussion Questions for November 15, 2015

Acts 27:1 – 28:10

Supernatural Storm

1. **Decisional Dilemma: (to sail or not to sail) 27:9-12**
All of us face “decisional dilemmas” and often disagree with the opinions of others. Why did Paul advise not to sail, and why did the “majority” have a different opinion? Whose opinion prevailed? How do you respond to situations when your view is not respected and your counsel is rejected? How did Paul respond?
2. **Storm at Sea: 27:13-19**
How does Luke’s record of the precise details of this entire incident influence your confidence in the inspiration and authority of the Bible? Twice these verses refer to being “driven along.” Do you ever find yourself in a circumstance (storm) where you feel powerless and you are a victim of forces outside your control? How does this sense of powerlessness affect you?
3. **Storm of the Soul: 27:20**
What is the impact of the “loss of hope” upon the soul? Has there been a time and circumstance in your life where you were without hope? Both believers and unbelievers battle this issue. For the person who does not yet know Christ, do you see them compassionately with “gospel goggles” as those who have no hope (see Ephesians 2:12-13)? As a believer in Christ, can you share a time when you were without hope due to some painful life circumstance? (see II Cor. 1:3-10)
4. **Hope for the Soul: 27:21-26**
 - a. What is the significance of Paul’s reference to the God to whom I belong? Do you believe in God’s sovereign ownership of all things, including the physical world, your life, resources, present circumstances, and temporal and eternal future? What did it cost God to purchase and own you (I Cor. 6:20)?
 - b. As a congregation, do we believe in God’s ownership of us (see I Peter 2:9-10)? Do you agree with the survey results from the “Holy Cow” consultants that we are a congregation filled with “systemic anxiety”? Do you agree that most Americans today battle anxiety on some level? If so, what causes this anxiety in our country, in our congregation, and in our own hearts?

- c. What is the “mandate” (command) of verse 24? Do not be. Why does Pastor Hopper keep reminding us that God does not give us “naked mandates” but always provides “gospel motives” with those mandates? How do the statements, the God to whom I belong and you must stand before Caesar provide peaceful and motivational power to Paul in the midst of his storm? Does God say the same thing to you? What is the difference between “believing in God” and “believing God”?
5. Escape Strategy: 27:30-32
What “escape strategies” do you use to respond to life’s storms? Why is the “sin of self-reliance” so deceitfully destructive to the Christian? Is this a sin you both name and repent of regularly? Is this also a congregational sin that needs repented of?
6. Strategic Shipwreck: 27:39-44
What good does God bring from this shipwreck . . . from your shipwreck? Do you believe that, by God’s sovereign power & mercy, you will be brought safely to land? Do you agree with the statement: “The one thing that Central Presbyterian Church needs the most at this point in time is a renewed hope and confidence in God’s holy sovereignty, generous grace, and providential provision”?