

Title: **"But We Must Run Aground": Great Grace and Good Grief**
Text: **Acts 27:13-26**
Date: **October 25, 2026**

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Big Idea

The Christian life is not always "smooth sailing." God interweaves both grace and grief on our way to glory . . . for our good!

1. The Tension

We like think that if we're in the center of God's will for us it means that everything will be going right, everything will be easy. But have you ever thought that to be in the center of God's will for you might sometimes mean you're going to be in the center of a storm? Because that's what's happening here in Acts 27 for Paul. Paul is right where God wants him to be (going to Rome—cf. Acts 19:21; 23:11; 27:24). And yet he's also stuck on a ship in a storm out at sea!

2. The Point

Why does God often keep grace and grief together in our lives? Why not just do away with all the grief now? Why not "smooth sailing" to glory . . . starting today?

Purpose #1: To Keep Us in Line

On the one hand, if all we ever got was the good stuff, if things only went well for us all the time, then our inevitable tendency would be towards pride. Suffering doesn't ruin your soul, it seasons it. It keeps you humble and attached to reality. But, on the other hand, if things were only ever hard, and there was no mingling of good things, no evidence that God is with us along the way, then we'd be given over to despair, to hopelessness, to darkness of heart and mind. God gives us just enough grief to keep us humble, and just enough grace to keep us hopeful.

Purpose #2: To Push Us Forward

When you hit a hard patch, it feels like your life is going backwards, like the winds are driving you in the wrong direction. But God uses the hard stuff to push you forward in his plan for you.

To give you a somewhat fun example from our text, consider how tragic it would have seemed that, just when these guys were making for the beach, they struck a reef, and "the stern was being broken up by the surf" (v. 41). That sounds terrible. But I wonder if you noticed: what do these guys do with the planks of boat that are broken off here? They "ride" (surf?! ;) them to shore. You might look at the broken ship of your life and think: "It's over. God's making a wreckage of my dreams." But he's not. Do you want to know what he's actually doing? He's shaping a surfboard for you to ride to land. Are you going to sulk in your suffering or you going to surf it?

"At this point in my life, having reached the age of 50, I've encountered both tremendous success and heart-wrenching pain. What I've found is that Jesus has been present through it all, and He surpasses all of it. Life can throw crazy challenges at us, but what remains constant is Jesus' presence and his ability to carry us through. He's greater and better than any circumstance we face." - Britt Merrick

Purpose #3: To Reveal His Glory

Suffering often sets the stage for us to see something of God and his glory that we otherwise couldn't. But God doesn't just bring us through hard times to reveal something of himself to us, Christians. He's also looking to reveal something of himself to others—to those outside the Christian faith, to those who are watching you and learning from you what kind of God he is.

People don't just need to hear your words. They need to see your life. These guys on the ship weren't changed by Paul's words. But when they saw his peace in the storm it drew them in (vv. 35-36).



Reflection Questions

- In what way have you been experiencing "grace" and "grief" in your life lately? How has God been using such things to keep you in line, push you forward, and reveal his glory to you and others?
- Have you been *sulking* in your suffering or *surfing* it? What would it look like for you to "surf your suffering" this week?

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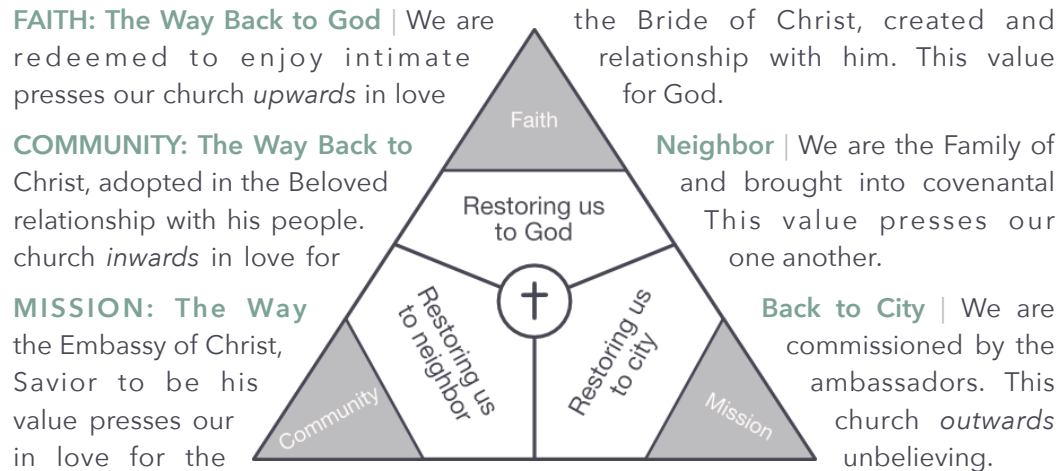


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Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.



Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Pumpkin Carving Party - THIS SATURDAY!

Mark your calendars for Mercy Hill's 5th annual Pumpkin Carving Party! This year's party will take place on Saturday, October 31st from 2:00-4:00pm at Allen at Steinbeck Elementary School. This event is for folks in our church, but it is also (and especially!) for our friends, family, and those in our local community. Feel free to spread the news and invite anyone you think would be blessed.

TO ATTEND: If you're planning to attend (and/or you've invited a friend), please scan the QR code below and find the link to RSVP by Wednesday (10/28) to guarantee a FREE pumpkin for your child(ren), ages 2-18.

TO VOLUNTEER: If you're already a part of Mercy Hill Church, we need YOUR help to make this happen! To volunteer, please scan the QR code below and find the link to sign up.

For any questions, please reach out to Joey at joey@mercyhillchurch.org.

Sunday Prayer Walk (Passing Out Flyers) - Today!

Christmas Bookmark-Making for Arms of Love

Scan the QR code below for more info and clickable content!

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